TITLE: **BACILLUS STEAROTHERMOPHILUS TAU, DELTA, AND DELTA PRIME POLYMERASE SUBUNITS AND USE THEREOF**

INVENTORS: **Michael E. O'Donnell, Alexander Yuzhakov, Olga Yurieva, David Jeruzalmi, Irina Bruck, and John Kuriyan**

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The present application is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/716,964, filed November 21, 2000, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/642,218, filed August 18, 2000, as a continuation of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/057,416 filed April 8, 1998, which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/043,202 filed April 8, 1997, all of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety.

The present invention was made with funding from National Institutes of Health Grant No. GM38839. The United States Government may have certain rights in this invention.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to thermostable DNA polymerases and, more particularly, to such polymerases as can serve as chromosomal replicases and are derived from thermophilic bacteria. More particularly, the invention extends to DNA polymerase III-type enzymes from thermophilic bacteria, including *Aquifex aeolicus*, *Thermus thermophilus*, *Thermotoga maritima*, and *Bacillus stearothermophilus*, as well as purified, recombinant or non-recombinant subunits thereof and their use, and to isolated DNA coding for such polymerases and their subunits. Such DNA is obtained from the respective genes (e.g., *dnaX, holA, holB, dnaA, dnaN, dnaQ, dnaE, ssb*, etc.) of various thermophilic eubacteria, including but not limited to *Thermus thermophilus, Aquifex aeolicus, Thermotoga maritima,* and *Bacillus stearothermophilus*.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Thermostable DNA polymerases have been disclosed previously as set forth in U.S. Patent No. 5,192,674 to Oshima et al., U.S. Patent Nos. 5,322,785 and 5,352,778 to Comb et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,545,552 to Mathur, and others. All of the noted references recite the use of polymerases as important catalytic tools in the practice of molecular cloning techniques such as polymerase chain reaction (PCR). Each of the references states that a drawback of the extant polymerases are their

limited thermostability, and consequent useful life in the participation in PCR. Such limitations also manifest themselves in the inability to obtain extended lengths of nucleotides, and in the instance of *Taq* polymerase, the lack of 3' to 5' exonuclease activity, and the drawback of the inability to excise misinserted nucleotides (Perrino, 1990).

More generally, such polymerases, including those disclosed in the referenced patents, are of the Polymerase I variety as they are often 90-95kDa in size and may have 5' to 3' exonuclease activity. They define a single subunit with concomitant limits on their ability to hasten the amplification process and to promote the rapid preparation of longer strands of DNA.

Chromosomal replicases are composed of several subunits in all organisms (Kornberg and Baker, 1992). In keeping with the need to replicate long chromosomes, replicases are rapid and highly processive multiprotein machines. Cellular replicases are classically comprised of three components: a clamp, a clamp loader, and the DNA polymerase (reviewed in Kelman and O'Donnell, 1995; McHenry, 1991). For purposes of the present invention, the foregoing components also serve as a broad definition of a "Pol III-type enzyme".

DNA polymerase III holoenzyme (Pol III holoenzyme) is the multi-subunit replicase of the *E. coli* chromosome. Pol III holoenzyme is distinguished from Pol I type DNA polymerases by its high processivity (>50 kbp) and rapid rate of synthesis (750 nts/s) (reviewed in Kornberg and Baker, 1992; Kelman and O'Donnell, 1995). The high processivity and speed is rooted in a ring shaped subunit, called ß, that encircles DNA and slides along it while tethering the Pol III holoenzyme to the template (Stukenberg et al., 1991; Kong et al., 1992). The ring shaped β clamp is assembled around DNA by the multisubunit clamp loader, called γ complex. The γ complex couples the energy of ATP hydrolysis to the assembly of the ß clamp onto DNA. This γ complex, which functions as a clamp loader, is an integral component of the Pol III holoenzyme particle. A brief overview of the organization of subunits within the holoenzyme and their function follows.

Pol III holoenzyme consists of 10 different subunits, some of which are present in multiple copies for a total of 18 polypeptide chains (Onrust et al., 1995). The organization of these subunits in the holoenzyme particle is illustrated in Fig. 1. As depicted in the diagram, the subunits of the holoenzyme can be grouped

functionally into three components: 1) the DNA polymerase III core is the catalytic unit and consists of the α (DNA polymerase), ε (3'-5' exonuclease), and θ subunits (McHenry and Crow, 1979), 2) the ß "sliding clamp" is the ring shaped protein that secures the core polymerase to DNA for processivity (Kong et al., 1992), and 3) the 5 protein γ complex (γδδ'χψ) is the "clamp loader" that couples ATP hydrolysis to assembly of ß clamps around DNA (O'Donnell, 1987; Maki et al., 1988). A dimer of the τ subunit acts as a "macromolecular organizer" holding together two molecules of core (Studwell-Vaughan and O'Donnell, 1991; Low et al., 1976) and one molecule of γ complex forming the Pol III* subassembly (Onrust et al., 1995). This organizing role of τ to form Pol III* is indicated in the center of Fig. 1. Two ß dimers associate with the two cores within Pol III* to form the holoenzyme, which is capable of replicating both strands of duplex DNA simultaneously (Maki et al., 1988).

The DNA polymerase III holoenzyme assembles onto a primed template in two distinct steps. In the first step, the γ complex assembles the ß clamp onto the DNA. The γ complex and the core polymerase utilize the same surface of the ß ring and they cannot both utilize it at the same time (Naktinis et al., 1996). Hence, in the second step the γ complex moves away from ß thus allowing access of the core polymerase to the ß clamp for processive DNA synthesis. The γ complex and core remain attached to each other during this switching process by the τ subunit organizer.

The γ complex consists of 5 different subunits ($\gamma_{2\text{-}4}\delta_1\delta'_1\chi_1\psi_1$). An overview of the mechanism of the clamp loading process follows. The δ subunit is the major touch point to the ß clamp and leads to ring opening, but δ is buried within γ complex such that contact with ß is prevented (Naktinis et al., 1995). The γ subunit is the ATP interactive protein but is not an ATPase by itself (Tsuchihashi and Kornberg, 1989). The δ' subunit bridges the δ and γ subunits resulting in a γδδ' complex that exhibits DNA dependent ATPase activity and is competent to assemble clamps on DNA (Onrust et al., 1991). Upon binding of ATP to γ, a change in the conformation of the complex exposes δ for interaction with ß (Naktinis et al., 1995). The function of the smaller subunits, χ and ψ, is to contact SSB (through χ) thus promoting clamp assembly and high processivity during replication (Kelman and O'Donnell, 1995).

The three component Pol III-type enzyme in eukaryotes contains a clamp that has the same shape as *E. coli* ß, but instead of a homodimer it is a heterotrimer. This heterotrimeric ring, called PCNA (proliferating cell nuclear antigen), has 6 domains like ß, but instead of each PCNA monomer being composed of 3 domains and dimerizing to form a 6 domain ring (e.g., like ß), the PCNA monomer has 2 domains and it trimerizes to form a 6 domain ring (Krishna et al., 1994; Kuriyan and O'Donnell, 1993). The chain fold of the domains are the same in prokaryotes (ß) and eukaryotes (PCNA); thus, the rings have the same overall 6-domain ring shape. The clamp loader of the eukaryotic Pol III-type replicase is called RFC (Replication factor C) and it consists of subunits having homology to the γ and δ' subunits of the *E. coli* γ complex (Cullmann et al., 1995). The eukaryotic DNA polymerase III-type enzyme contains either of two DNA polymerases, DNA polymerase δ and DNA polymerase ε (Bambara and Jessee, 1991; Linn, 1991; Sugino, 1995). It is entirely conceivable that yet other types of DNA polymerases can function with either a PCNA or ß clamp to form a Pol III-type enzyme (for example, DNA polymerase II of *E. coli* functions with the ß subunit placed onto DNA by the γ complex clamp loader) (Hughes et al., 1991; Bonner et al., 1992). The bacteriophage T4 also utilizes a Pol III-type 3-component replicase. The clamp is a homotrimer like PCNA, called gene 45 protein (Young et al., 1992). The gene 45 protein forms the same 6-domain ring structure as ß and PCNA (Moarefi et al., 2000). The clamp loader is a complex of two subunits called the gene 44/62 protein complex. The DNA polymerase is the gene 43 protein and it is stimulated by the gene 45 sliding clamp when it is assembled onto DNA by the 44/62 protein clamp loader. The Pol III-type enzyme may be either bound together into one particle (e.g., *E. coli* Pol III holoenzyme), or its three components may function separately (like the eukaryotic Pol III-type replicases).

There is an early report on separation of three DNA polymerases from *T.th.* cells, however each polymerase form was reminiscent of the preexisting types of DNA polymerase isolated from thermophiles in that each polymerase was in the 110,000-120,000 range and lacked 3'-5' exonuclease activity (Ruttimann et al., 1985). These are well below the molecular weight of Pol III-type complexes that contain in addition to the DNA polymerase subunit, other subunits such as γ and τ. Although the three polymerases displayed some differences in activity (column elution behavior,

and optimum divalent cation, template, and temperatures) it seems likely that these three forms were either different repair type polymerases or derivatives of one repair enzyme (e.g., Pol I) that was modified by post translational modification(s) that altered their properties (e.g. phosphorylation, methylation, proteolytic clipping of residues that alter activity, or association with different ligands such as a small protein or contaminating DNA). Despite this previous work, it remained to be demonstrated that thermophiles harbor a Pol III-type enzyme that contain multiple subunits such as γ and/or τ, functioned with a sliding clamp accessory protein, or could extend a primer rapidly and processively over a long stretch (>5kb) of ssDNA (Ruttimann et al., 1985).

Previously, it was not known what polymerase thermophilic bacteria used to replicate their chromosome since only Pol I type enzymes have been reported from thermophiles. By distinction, chromosomal replicases, such as Polymerase III, identified in *E. coli*, if available in a thermostable bacterium, with all its accessory subunits, could provide a great improvement over the Polymerase I type enzymes, in that they are generally much more efficient – about 5 times faster – and much more highly processive. Hence, one may expect faster and longer chain production in PCR, and higher quality of DNA sequencing ladders. Clearly, the ability to practice such synthetic techniques as PCR would be enhanced by these methods disclosed for how to obtain genes and subunits of DNA polymerase III holoenzyme from thermophilic sources.

The present invention is directed to achieving these objectives and overcoming the various deficiencies in the art.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the present invention, DNA Polymerase III-type enzymes as defined herein are disclosed that may be isolated and purified from a thermophilic bacterial source, that display rapid synthesis characteristic of a chromosomal replicase, and that possesses all of the structural and processive advantages sought and recited above. More particularly, the invention extends to thermostable Polymerase III-type enzymes derived from thermophilic bacteria that exhibit the ability to extend a primer over a long stretch (>5kb) of ssDNA at elevated

temperature, the ability to be stimulated by a cognate sliding clamp (e.g., β) of the type that is assembled on DNA by a 'clamp' loader (e.g., γ complex), and have clamp loading subunits that show DNA stimulated ATPase activity at elevated temperature and/or ionic strength. Representative thermophile polymerases include those isolated from the thermophilic eubacteria *Aquifex aeolicus* (*A.ae.* polymerase) and other members of the *Aquifex* genus; *Thermus thermophilus* (*T.th.* polymerase), *Thermus favus* (*Tfl/Tub* polymerase), *Thermus ruber* (*Tru* polymerase), *Thermus brockianus* (DYNAZYME™ polymerase), and other members of the *Thermus* genus; *Bacillus stearothermophilus* (*B.st.* polymerase) and other members of the *Bacillus* genus; *Thermoplasma acidophilum* (*Tac* polymerase) and other members of the *Thermoplasma* genus; and *Thermotoga neapolitana* (*Tne* polymerase; see WO 96/10640 to Chatterjee et al.), *Thermotoga maritima* (*Tma* polymerase; see U.S. Patent No. 5,374,553 to Gelfand et al.), and other species of the *Thermotoga* genus (*Tsp* polymerase). In a preferred embodiment, the thermophilic bacteria comprise species of *Aquifex*, *Thermus*, *Bacillus*, and *Thermotoga*, and particularly *A.ae.*, *T.th.*, *B.st.*, and *Tma*.

A particular Polymerase III-type enzyme in accordance with the invention may include at least one of the following sub-units:

A. a γ subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. Nos. 4 or 5 (*T.th.*);

B. a τ subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 2 (*T.th.*), SEQ. ID. No. 120 (*A.ae.*), SEQ. ID. No. 142 (*T.ma.*) or SEQ. ID. No. 182 (*B.st.*);

C. a ε subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 95 (*T.th.*), SEQ. ID. No. 128 (*A.ae.*), or SEQ. ID. No. 140 (*T.ma.*);

D. a α subunit including an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 87 (*T.th.*), SEQ. ID. No. 118 (*A.ae.*), SEQ. ID. No. 138 (*T.ma.*), or SEQ. ID. Nos. 184 (PolC which has both α and ε activity, *B.st.*);

E. a ß subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 107 (*T.th.*), SEQ. ID. No. 122 (*A.ae.*), SEQ. ID. No. 144 (*T.ma.*), or SEQ. ID. No. 174 (*B.st.*);

F. a δ subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 158 (*T.th.*), SEQ. ID. No. 124 (*A.ae.*), SEQ. ID. No. 146 (*T.ma.*) or SEQ. ID. No. 178 (*B.st.*);

G. a δ' subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 156 (*T.th.*), SEQ. ID. No. 126 (*A.ae.*), SEQ. ID. No. 148 (*T.ma.*) or SEQ. ID. No. 180 (*B.st.*);

variants, including allelic variants, muteins, analogs and fragments of any of subparts (A) through (G), and compatible combinations thereof, capable of functioning in DNA amplification and sequencing.

The invention also extends to the genes that correspond to and can code on expression for the subunits set forth above, and accordingly includes the following: *dnaX*, *holA*, *holB*, *dnaQ*, *dnaE*, *dnaN*, and *ssb*, as well as conserved variants and active fragments thereof.

Accordingly, the Polymerase III-type enzyme of the present invention comprises at least one gene encoding a subunit thereof, which gene is selected from the group consisting of *dnaX*, *holA*, *holB*, *dnaQ*, *dnaE* and *dnaN*, and combinations thereof. More particularly, the invention extends to the nucleic acid molecule encoding the γ and τ subunits, and includes the *dnaX* gene which has a nucleotide sequence as set forth herein, as well as conserved variants, active fragments and analogs thereof. Likewise, the nucleotide sequences encoding the α subunit (*dnaE* gene), the ε subunit (*dnaQ* gene), the β subunit (*dnaN* gene), the δ subunit (*holA* gene), and the δ' subunit (*holB* gene) each comprise the nucleotide sequences as set forth herein, as well as conserved variants, active fragments and analogs thereof. Those nucleotide sequences for *T.th.* are as follows: *dnaX* (SEQ. ID. No. 3), *dnaE* (SEQ. ID. No. 86), *dnaQ* (SEQ. ID. No. 94), *dnaN* (SEQ. ID. No. 106), *holA* (SEQ. ID. No. 157), and *holB* (SEQ. ID. No. 155). Those nucleotide sequences for *A.ae.* are as follows: *dnaX* (SEQ. ID. No. 119), *dnaE* (SEQ. ID. No. 117), *dnaQ* (SEQ. ID. No. 127), *dnaN* (SEQ. ID. No. 121), *holA* (SEQ. ID. No. 123), and *holB* (SEQ. ID. No. 125). Those nucleotide sequences for *T.ma.* are as follows: *dnaX* (SEQ. ID. No. 141), *dnaE* (SEQ. ID. No. 137), *dnaQ* (SEQ. ID. No. 139), *dnaN* (SEQ. ID. No. 143), *holA* (SEQ. ID. No. 145), and *holB* (SEQ. ID. No. 147). Those nucleotide sequences for *B.st.* are as follows: *dnaX* (SEQ. ID. No. 181), *polC* (SEQ. ID. Nos. 183), *dnaN* (SEQ. ID. No. 173), *holA* (SEQ. ID. No. 177), and *holB* (SEQ. ID. No. 179).

The invention also provides methods and products for identifying, isolating and cloning DNA molecules which encode such accessory subunits encoded by the recited genes of the DNA polymerase III-type enzyme hereof.

Yet further, the invention extends to Polymerase III-type enzymes prepared by the purification of an extract taken from, e.g., the particular thermophile under examination, treated with appropriate solvents and then subjected to chromatographic separation on, e.g., an anion exchange column, followed by analysis of long chain synthetic ability or Western analysis of the respective peaks against antibody to at least one of the anticipated enzyme subunits to confirm presence of Pol III, and thereafter, peptide sequencing of subunits that co purify and amplification to obtain the putative gene and its encoded enzyme.

The present invention also relates to recombinant γ, τ, ε, α (as well as PolC), δ, δ' and ß subunits and SSB from thermophiles. In the instance of the γ and τ subunits of *T.th.*, the invention includes the characterization of a frameshifting sequence that is internal to the gene and specifies relative abundance of the γ and τ gene products of *T.th. dnaX*. From this characterization, expression of either one of the subunits can be increased at the expense of the other (i.e. mutant frameshift could make all τ, simple recloning at the end of the frameshift could make exclusively γ and no τ).

In a further aspect of the present invention, DNA probes can be constructed from the DNA sequences coding for, e.g., the *T.th.*, *A.ae.*, *T.ma.*, or *B.st. dnaX*, *dnaQ*, *dnaE*, *dnaA*, *dnaN*, *holA*, *holB*, and *ssb* genes, conserved variants and active fragments thereof, all as defined herein, and may be used to identify and isolate the corresponding genes coding for the subunits of DNA polymerase III holoenzyme from other thermophiles, such as those listed earlier herein. Accordingly, all chromosomal replicases (DNA Polymerase III-type) from thermophilic sources are contemplated and included herein.

The invention also extends to methods for identifying Polymerase III-type enzymes by use of the techniques of long-chain extension and elucidation of subunits with antibodies, as described herein and with reference to the examples.

The invention further extends to the isolated and purified DNA Polymerase III from *T.th.*, *A.ae.*, *T.ma.*, and *B.st.*, the amino acid sequences of the γ, τ, ε, α (as well as PolC), δ, δ', and ß subunits and SSB, as set forth herein, and the

nucleotide sequences of the corresponding genes from *T.th.*, *A.ae.*, *T.ma.*, or *B.st.* set forth herein, as well as to active fragments thereof, oligonucleotides and probes prepared or derived therefrom and the transformed cells that may be likewise prepared. Accordingly, the invention comprises the individual subunits enumerated above and hereinafter, corresponding isolated polynucleotides and respective amino acid sequences for each of the γ, τ, ε, α (as well as PolC), δ, δ', and ß subunits and SSB, and to conserved variants, fragments, and the like, as well as to methods of their preparation and use in DNA amplification and sequencing. In a particular embodiment, the invention extends to vectors for the expression of the subunit genes of the present invention.

The invention also includes methods for the preparation of the DNA Polymerase III-type enzymes and the corresponding subunit genes of the present invention, and to the use of the enzymes and constructs having active fragments thereof, in the preparation, reconstitution or modification of like enzymes, as well as in amplification and sequencing of DNA by methods such as PCR, and like protocols, and to the DNA molecules amplified and sequenced by such methods. In this regard, a Pol III-type enzyme that is reconstituted in the absence of ε, or using a mutated ε with less 3'-5' exonuclease activity, may be a superior enzyme in either PCR or DNA sequencing applications, (e.g. Tabor et al., 1995).

The invention is directed to methods for amplifying and sequencing a DNA molecule, particularly via the polymerase chain reaction (PCR), using the present DNA polymerase III-type enzymes or complexes. In particular, the invention extends to methods of amplifying and sequencing of DNA using thermostable pol III-type enzyme complexes isolated from thermophilic bacteria such as *Thermotoga* and *Thermus* species, or recombinant thermostable enzymes. The invention also provides amplified DNA molecules made by the methods of the invention, and kits for amplifying or sequencing a DNA molecule by the methods of the invention.

In this connection, the invention extends to methods for amplification of DNA that can achieve long chain extension of primed DNA, as by the application and use of Polymerase III-type enzymes of the present invention. An illustration of such methods is presented in Examples 15 and 16, *infra.*

Likewise, kits for amplification and sequencing of such DNA molecules are included, which kits contain the enzymes of the present invention,

including subunits thereof, together with other necessary or desirable reagents and materials, and directions for use. The details of the practice of the invention as set forth above and later on herein, and with reference to the patents and literature cited herein, are all expressly incorporated herein by reference and made a part hereof.

As stated, and in accordance with a principal object of the present invention, Polymerase III-type enzymes and their sub-units are provided that are derived from thermophiles and that are adapted to participate in improved DNA amplification and sequencing techniques, and the consequent ability to prepare larger DNA strands more rapidly and accurately.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide DNA molecules that are amplified and sequenced using the Polymerase III-type enzymes hereof.

It is a still further object of the present invention to provide enzymes and corresponding methods for amplification and sequencing of DNA that can be practiced without the participation of the clamp-loading component of the enzyme.

It is a still further object of the present invention to provide kits and other assemblies of materials for the practice of the methods of amplification and sequencing as aforesaid, that include and use the DNA polymerase III-type enzymes herein as part thereof.

One goal of this invention is to fully reconstitute the rapid and processive replicase from an extreme thermophilic eubacterium from fully recombinant protein subunits. One might think that the extreme heat in which these bacteria grow may have resulted in a completely different solution to the problem of chromosome replication. Prior to filing of the previously-identified priority applications, it is believed that Pol III had not been identified in any thermophile until the present inventors found that *Thermus thermophilus*, which grows at a rather high temperature of 70-80°C, would appear to contain a Pol III. Subsequent to this invention, the genome sequence of *A. aeolicus* was published which shows *dnaE*, *dnaN*, and *dnaX* genes. However, previous work did not fully reconstitute the working replication machinery from fully recombinant subunits. A *holA* gene and *holB* has not been identified previously in *T. thermophilus* or *A. aeolicus*, and studies in the *E. coli* system show that delta and delta prime, encoded by *holA* and *holB*, respectively, are essential to loading the beta clamp onto DNA and, thus, is essential

for rapid and processive holoenzyme function (U.S. Patent Nos. 5,583,026 and 5,668,004 to O'Donnell, which are hereby incorporated by reference).

This invention fully reconstitutes a functional DNA polymerase III holoenzyme from the extreme thermophiles *Thermus thermophilus* and *Aquifex aeolicus*. *Aquifex aeolicus* grows at an even higher temperature than *Thermus thermophilus*, up to 85°C. In this invention, the genes of *Thermus thermophilus*, *Aquifex aeolicus*, *Thermotoga maritima*, and *Bacillus stearothermophilus* that are necessary to reconstitute the complete DNA polymerase III machinery, which acts as a rapid and processive polymerase, are identified. Indeed, a delta prime (*holB*) and delta (*holA*) subunits are needed.

The *dnaE*, *dnaN*, *dnaX*, *dnaQ*, *holA*, and *holB* genes are used to express and purify the protein "gears", and the proteins are used to reassemble the replication machine. The *T.th.* Pol III is similar to *E. coli*. The *A.ae.* Pol III is slightly dissimilar from the machinery of previously studied replicases. The *A.ae. dnaX* gene encoded only one protein, tau, and in this fashion is similar to the *dnaX* of the gram positive organism, *Staphylococcus aureus*. In contrast, the *dnaX* of the gram negative cell, *E. coli*, produces two proteins. The *Aquifex aeolicus* polymerase subunit, alpha (encoded by *dnaE*) does not contain the 3'-5' proofreading exonuclease. In this regard, *A. aeolicus* is similar to *E. coli*, but dissimilar to the replicase of the gram positive organisms. In Gram positive organisms, the PolC polymerase subunit of the replicase contains the exonuclease activity in the same polypeptide chain as the polymerase (Low et al., 1976; Barnes et al., 1994; Pacitti et al., 1995). Further, the polymerase III of thermophilic bacteria retains activity at high temperature.

Thermostable rapid and processive three component DNA polymerases can be applied to several important uses. DNA polymerases currently in use for DNA sequencing and DNA amplification use enzymes that are much slower and thus could be improved upon. This is especially true of amplification as the three component polymerase is capable of speed and high processivity making possible amplification of very long (tens of Kb to Mb) lengths of DNA in a time-efficient manner. These three component polymerases also function in conjunction with a replicative helicase (DnaB), and thus are capable of amplification at a single temperature, using the helicase to melt the DNA duplex. This property could be useful in some methods of amplification, and in polymerase chain reaction (PCR) methodology. For example, the $\alpha\tau\delta\delta'/\beta$ form of the *E. coli* DNA polymerase III holoenzyme has been shown to

function in both DNA sequencing and PCR (U.S. Patent Nos. 5,583,026 and 5,668,004 to O'Donnell).

Other objects and advantages will become apparent from a review of the ensuing description which proceeds with reference to the following illustrative drawings.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGURE 1 is a schematic depiction of the structure and components of enzymes of the general family to which the enzymes of the present invention belong.

FIGURE 2 is an alignment of the N-terminal regions of *E. coli* (SEQ. ID. No. 19) and *B. subtilis* (SEQ. ID. No. 20) *dnaX* gene product. Asterisks indicate identities. The ATP binding consensus sequence is indicated. The two regions used for PCR primer design are shown in bold.

FIGURE 3 is an image showing the Southern analysis of *T. thermophilus* genomic DNA. Genomic DNA was analyzed for presence of the *dnaZ* gene using the PCR radiolabeled probe. Enzymes used for digestion are shown above each lane. The numbering to the right corresponds to the length of DNA fragments (kb).

FIGURES 4A and 4B depict the full sequence of the *dnaX* gene of *T. thermophilus*. DNA sequence (upper case, and corresponding to SEQ ID No. 1) and predicted amino acid sequence (lower case, and corresponding to SEQ ID No. 2) yields a 529 amino acid protein (τ) of 58.0 kDa. A putative frameshifting sequence containing several A residues 1478-1486 (underlined) may produce a smaller protein (γ) of 49.8 kDa. The potential Shine-Dalgarno (S.D.) signal is bold and underlined. The start codon is in bold, and the stop codon for τ is marked by an asterisk. The potential stop codon for γ is shown in bold after the frameshift site, and two potential Shine-Dalgarno sequences upstream of the frameshift site are indicated. Sequences of the primers used for PCR are shown in italics above the nucleotide sequence of *dnaX*. The ATP binding site is indicated, and the asterisks above the four Cys residues near the ATP site indicate the putative Zn^{2+} finger. The proline rich area is indicated above the sequence. Numbering of the nucleotide sequence is presented to the right. Numbering of the amino acid sequence of τ is shown in parenthesis to the right.

FIGURE 4C depicts the isolated DNA coding sequence for the *dnaX* gene (also present in FIGURES 3A and 3B) in accordance with the invention, which corresponds to SEQ. ID. No. 3.

FIGURE 4D depicts the polypeptide sequence of the γ subunit of the Polymerase III of the present invention, which corresponds to SEQ. ID. No. 4.

FIGURE 4E depicts the polypeptide sequence of the γ subunit of the Polymerase III of the present invention defined by a -1 frameshift, which corresponds to SEQ. ID. No. 4.

FIGURE 4F depicts the polypeptide sequence of the γ subunit of the Polymerase III of the present invention defined by a -2 frameshift, which corresponds to SEQ. ID. No. 5.

FIGURES 5A-B are alignments of the γ/τ ATP binding domains for different bacteria. Dots indicate those residues that are identical to the *E. coli dnaX* sequence. The ATP consensus site is underlined, and the conserved cysteine residues that form the zinc finger are indicated with asterisks. *E. coli*, *Escherichia coli* (SEQ. ID. No. 21); *H. inf.*, *Haemophilus influenzae* (SEQ. ID. No. 22); *B. sub.*, *Bacillus subtilis* (SEQ. ID. No. 23); *C. cres.*, *Caulobacter crescentus* (SEQ. ID. No. 24); *M. gen.*, *Mycoplasma genitalium* (SEQ. ID. No. 25); *T.th.*, *Thermus thermophilus* (SEQ. ID. No. 26). Alignments were produced using Clustal.

FIGURE 6 is a diagram indicating a signal for ribosomal frameshifting in *T.th. dnaX*. The diagram shows part of the sequence of the RNA (SEQ. ID. No. 27) around the frameshifting site (SEQ. ID. No. 28), including the suspected slippery sequence A9 (bold italic). The stop codon in the -2 reading frame is indicated. Also indicated are potential step loop structures and the nearest stop codons in the -1 reading frame.

FIGURE 7 is an image showing a Western analysis of γ and τ in *T.th.* cells. Whole cells were lysed in SDS and electrophoresed on a 10 % SDS polyacrylamide gel then transferred to a membrane and probed with polyclonal antibody against *E. coli* γ/τ as described in Experimental Procedures. Positions of molecular weight size markers are shown to the left. Putative *T.th.* γ and τ are indicated to the right.

FIGURES 8A-B are images of *E. coli* colonies expressing *T.th. dnaX* -1 and -2 frameshifts. The region of the *dnaX* gene slippery sequence was cloned into

the *lacZ* gene of pUC19 in three reading frames, then transformed into *E. coli* cells and plated on LB plates containing X-gal. The slippery sequence was also mutated by inserting two G residues into the A9 sequence and then cloned into pUC19 in all three reading frames. Color of colonies observed are indicated by the plus signs. The picture shows the colonies, the type of frameshift required for readthrough (blue color) is indicted next to the sector.

FIGURE 9 shows the construction of the *T.th.* γ/τ expression vector. A genomic fragment containing a partial sequence of *dnaX* was cloned into pALTER-1. This fragment was subcloned into pUC19 (pUC19_*dnaX*). Then the N-terminal section of *dnaX* was amplified such that the fragment was flanked by NdeI (at the initiating codon) and the internal BamHI site. This fragment was inserted to form the entire coding sequence of the *dnaX* gene in pUC19 (pUC19*dnaX*). The *dnaX* gene was then cloned behind the polyhistidine leader in the T7 based expression vector pET16 to give pET16*dnaX*. Details are in "Experimental Procedures".

FIGURES 10A-C illustrate the purification of recombinant *T.th.* γ and τ subunits. *T.th.* γ and τ subunits were expressed in *E. coli* harboring pET16*dnaX*. Molecular size markers are shown to the left of the gels, and the two induced proteins are labeled as g and t to the right of the gel. Panel A) 10% SDS gel of *E. coli* whole cell lysates before and after induction with IPTG. Panel B) 8% SDS gel of the purification two steps after cell lysis. First lane: the lysate was applied to a HiTrap Nickel chromatography column. Second lane: the *T.th.* γ/τ subunits were further purified on a Superose 12 gel filtration column. Third lane, the *E. coli* γ and τ subunits. Panel C) Western analysis of the pure *T.th.* γ and τ subunits (first lane) and *E. coli* γ and τ subunits (second lane).

FIGURES 11A-B show the gel filtration of *T.th.* γ and τ. *T.th.* γ and τ were gel filtered on a Superose 12 column. Column fractions were analyzed for ATPase activity and in a Coomassie Blue stained 10% SDS polyacrylamide gel. Positions of molecular weight markers are shown to the left of the gel. The elution position of size standards analyzed in a parallel Superose 12 column under identical conditions are indicated above the gel. Thyroglobin (670 kDa), bovine gamma globin (150 kDa), chicken ovalbumin (44 kDa), equine myoglobin (17 kDa).

FIGURES 12A-C illustrate the characterization of the *T.th.* γ and τ ATPase activity. The *T.th.* γ/τ and *E. coli* τ subunits are compared in their ATPase

activity characteristics. Due to the greater activity of *E. coli* τ, the values are plotted as percent for ease of comparison. Actual specific activities for 100 % values are given below as pmol ATP hydrolyzed/30 min./pmol *T.th.* γ/τ (or pmol *E. coli* τ). Panel A) *T.th.* γ and τ ATPase is stimulated by the presence of ssDNA. *T.th.* γ/τ was incubated at 65°C. Specific activity was: 11.5 (+DNA); 2.5 (-DNA); *E. coli* τ was assayed at 37°C. Specific activity values were: 112.5 (+DNA); (7.3-DNA). Panel B) Temperature stability of DNA stimulated ATPase activity. *T.th.* γ/τ, 11.3 (65°C); *E. coli* τ, 97.5 (37°C). Panel C) Stability of *T.th.* γ/τ ATPase to NaCl. *T.th.* γ/τ, 8.1 (100 mM added NaCl and 65°C); *E. coli* τ, 52.7 (0 M added NaCl and 37°C).

FIGURES 13A-13C are graphs that summarize the purification of the DNA polymerase III from *T.th.* extracts. Panel A) shows the activity and total protein in column fractions from the Heparin Agarose column. Peak 1 fractions were chromatographed on ATP agarose. Panel B) depicts the ATP-agarose column step, and Panel C) shows the total protein and DNA polymerase activity eluted from the MonoQ column.

FIGURES 14A-B are SDS polyacrylamide gels of *T.th.* subunits. Fig. 14A is a 12% SDS polyacrylamide gel stained with Coomassie Blue of the MonoQ column. Load stands for the material loaded onto the column (ATP agarose bound fractions). FT stands for protein that flowed through the MonoQ column. Fractions are indicated above the gel. *T.th.* subunits in fractions 17-19 are indicated by the labels placed between fractions 18 and 19. Additional small subunits may be present but difficult to visualize, or may have run off the gel. *E. coli* γ,δ shows a mixture of the α, γ, and δ subunits of DNA polymerase III holoenzyme (they are labeled to the right in the figure). Fig. 14B shows the Western results of an SDS gel of the MonoQ fractions probed with rabbit antiserum raised against the *E. coli* α subunit. Load and FT are as described in Panel A. Fraction numbers are shown above the gel. The band that comigrates with *E. coli* α, and the band in the Coomassie Blue stained gel in Panel A, is marked with an arrow. This band was analyzed for microsequence and the results are shown in Fig. 15.

FIGURES 15A-B show the alignments of the peptides obtained from *T.th.* α subunit, TTH1 (shown in A) and TTH2 (shown in B) with the amino acid sequences of the α subunits of other organisms. The amino acid number of these regions within each respective protein sequence are shown to the right. The abbreviations of the organisms are as follows. *E.coli* - *Escherichia coli* (SEQ ID NOS: 72 and 79 in 15A-B,

respectively), *V.chol.- Vibrio cholerae* (SEQ ID NOS: 73 and 80 in 15A-B, respectively), *H.inf. - Haemophilus influenzae* (SEQ ID NOS: 74 and 81 in 15A-B, respectively), *R.prow. - Rickettsia prowazekii* (SEQ ID NOS: 75 and 82 in 15A-B, respectively), *H.pyl. - Helicobacter pylori* (SEQ ID NOS: 76 and 83 in 15A-B, respectively), *S.sp. - Synechocystis sp.* (SEQ ID NOS: 77 and 84 in 15A-B, respectively), *M.tub. - Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (SEQ ID NOS: 78 and 85 in 15A-B, respectively), *T.th. - Thermus thermophilus* (SEQ ID NOS: 61 and 60 in 15A-B, respectively).

FIGURES 16A-C show a nucleotide (Panels A-B, SEQ. ID. No. 86) and amino acid (Panel C, SEQ. ID. No. 87) sequence of the *dnaE* gene encoding the α subunit of DNA polymerase III replication enzyme.

FIGURE 17 shows an alignment of the amino acid sequence of ε subunits encoded by *dnaQ* of several organisms. The amino acid sequence of the *Thermus thermophilus* ε subunit of *dnaQ* is also shown. *T.th., Thermus thermophilus* (SEQ. ID. No. 88); *D.rad., Deinococcus radiodurans* (SEQ. ID. No. 89); *Bac.sub., Bacillus subtilis* (SEQ. ID. No. 90); *H.inf., Haemophilus influenzae* (SEQ. ID. No. 91); *E.c., Escherichia coli* (SEQ. ID. No. 92); *H.pyl., Helicobacter pylori* (SEQ. ID. No. 93). The regions used to obtain the inner part of the *dnaQ* gene are shown in bold. The starts used for expression of the *T.th.* ε subunit are marked.

FIGURES 18A-B show the nucleotide (Panel A, SEQ. ID. No. 94) and amino acid (Panel B, SEQ. ID. No. 95) sequence of the *dnaQ* gene encoding the ε subunit of DNA polymerase III replication enzyme.

FIGURES 19A-B show an alignment of the DnaA protein of several organisms. The amino acid sequence of the *Thermus thermophilus* DnaA protein is also shown. *P.mar., Pseudomonas marcesans* (SEQ. ID. No. 96); *Syn.sp., Synechocystis sp.* (SEQ. ID. No. 97); *Bac.sub., Bacillus subtilis* (SEQ. ID. No. 98); *M. tub*; *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (SEQ. ID. No. 99); *T.th., Thermus thermophilus* (SEQ. ID. No. 100); *E.coli., Escherichia coli* (SEQ. ID. No. 101); *T. mar., Thermatoga maritima* (SEQ. ID. No. 102); and *H.pyl., Helicobacter pylori* (SEQ. ID. No. 103).

FIGURES 20A-B show the nucleotide (Panel A, SEQ. ID. No. 104) and amino acid (Panel B, SEQ. ID. No. 105) sequence of the *dnaA* gene of *Thermus thermophilus*.

FIGURES 21A-B show the nucleotide (Panel A, SEQ. ID. No. 106) and amino acid (Panel B, SEQ. ID. No. 107) sequence of the *dnaN* gene encoding the β subunit of DNA polymerase III replication enzyme.

FIGURES 22A-B show an alignment of the ß subunit of *T.th.* to the ß subunits of other organisms. *T.th.*, *Thermus thermophilus* (SEQ. ID. No. 108); *E. coli*, *Escherichia coli* (SEQ. ID. No. 109); *P. mirab*, *Proteus mirabilis* (SEQ. ID. No. 110); *H. infl*, *Haemophilus influenzae* (SEQ. ID. No. 111); *P. put.*, *Pseudomonas putida* (SEQ. ID. No. 112); and *B. cap.*, *Buchnera aphidicola* (SEQ. ID. No. 113).

FIGURE 23 is a map of the pET24:dnaN plasmid. The functional regions of the plasmid are indicated by arrows and italic, restriction sites are marked with bars and symbols. The hatched parts in the plasmid correspond to *T.th. dnaN*.

FIGURES 24A-B show the induction of *T.th.* ß in *E. coli* cells harboring the *T.th.* ß expression vector. Panel A is the cell induction. The first lane shows molecular weight markers (MW). The second lane shows uninduced *E. coli* cells, and the third lane shows induced *E. coli*. The induced *T.th.* ß is indicated by the arrow shown to the left. Induced cells were lysed then treated with heat and the soluble portion was chromatographed on MonoQ. Panel B shows the results of MonoQ purification of *T.th.* ß.

FIGURE 25A is a schematic depiction of the use of the use of the enzymes of the present invention in accordance with an alternate embodiment hereof. In this scheme the clamp (ß or PCNA) slides over the end of linear DNA to enhance the polymerase (Pol III-type such as Pol III, Polß or Polδ.) In this fashion the clamp loader activity is not needed.

FIGURE 25B graphically demonstrates the results of the practice of the alternate embodiment of the invention described and set forth in Example 15, *infra*. Lane 1, *E. coli* Pol III without ß; Lane 2, *E. coli* with ß; Lane 3, human Polδ without PCNA; Lane 4, human Polδ with PCNA; Lane 5, *T.th.* Pol III without *T.th.* ß; Lane 6, *T.th.* Pol III with *T.th.* ß. The respective pmol synthesis in lanes 1-6 are: 6, 35, 2, 24, 0.6 and 1.9.

FIGURES 26A-B show the use of *T.th.* Pol III in extending singly primed M13mp18 to an RFII form. The scheme in Fig. 26A shows the primed template in which a DNA 57mer was annealled to the M13mp18 ssDNA circle. Then *T.th.* ß subunit (produced recombinantly) and *T.th.* Pol III were added to the DNA in the presence of radioactive nucleoside triphosphates. In Fig. 26B, the products of the reaction were analyzed in a 0.8% native agarose gel. The position of ssDNA starting

material, the RFII product, and of intermediate species, are shown to the sides of the gel. Lane 1, use of Pol III. Lane 2, use of the non-Pol III DNA polymerase.

FIGURE 27 is an SDS polyacrylamide gel of the proteins of the *A. aeolicus* replication machinery.

FIGURE 28 is an SDS polyacrylamide gel analysis of the MonoQ fractions of the method used to reconstitute and purify the *A. aeolicus* τδδ' complex.

FIGURE 29 is an SDS polyacrylamide gel analysis of the gel filtration column fractions used in the preparation of the *A. aeolicus* αττδδ' complex. The bottom gel analysis shows the profile obtained using the *A. aeolicus* α subunit (polymerase) in the absence of the other subunits.

FIGURE 30 is an alkaline agarose gel analysis of reaction products for extension of a single primer around a 7.2 kb M13mp18 circular ssDNA genome that has been coated with *A. aeolicus* SSB. The time course on the left are produced by αττδδ'/β, and the time course on the right is produced by αττδδ' in the absence of β.

FIGURE 31 is a graph illustrating the optimal temperature for activity of the alpha subunit of *Thermus* replicase using a calf thymus DNA replication assay. Reactions were shifted to the indicated temperature for 5 minutes before detecting the level of DNA synthesis activity.

FIGURE 32 is a graph illustrating the optimal temperature for activity of the alpha subunit of the *Aquifex* replicase using a calf thymus DNA replication assay. Reactions were shifted to the indicated temperature for 5 minutes before detecting the level of DNA synthesis activity.

FIGURES 33A-E illustrate the heat stability of *Aquifex* components. Assays of either α (Fig. 33A), β (Fig. 33B), τδδ' complex (Fig. 33C), SSB (Fig. 33D) and αττδδ' complex (Fig. 33E) were performed after heating samples at the indicated temperatures. Components were heated in buffer containing the following: 0.1% Triton X-100 (filled diamonds); 0.05% Tween-20 and 0.01% NP-40 (filled circles); 4 mM $CaCl_2$ (filled triangles); 40% Glycerol (inverted filled triangles); 0.01% Triton X-100, 0.05% Tween-20, 0.01% NP-40, 4 mM $CaCl_2$ (half-filled square); 40% Glycerol, 0.1% Triton X-100 (open diamonds); 40% Glycerol, 0.05% Tween-20, 0.01% NP-40 (open circles); 40% Glycerol, 4 mM $CaCl_2$ (open triangles); 40% Glycerol, 0.01% Triton X-100, 0.05% Tween-20, 0.01% NP-40, 4 mM $CaCl_2$ (half-filled diamonds).

FIGURES 34A-B show the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 117) of the *dnaE* gene of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 35 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 118) of the α subunit of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 36 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 119) of the *dnaX* gene of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 37 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 120) of the tau subunit of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 38 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 121) of the *dnaN* gene of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 39 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 122) of the β subunit of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 40 shows the partial nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 123) of the *holA* gene of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 41 shows the partial amino acide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 124) of the δ subunit of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 42 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 125) of the *holB* gene of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 43 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 126) of the δ' subunit of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 44 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 127) of the *dnaQ* of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 45 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 128) of the ε subunit of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 46 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 129) of the *ssb* gene of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 47 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 130) of the single-strand binding protein of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 48 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 131) of the *dnaB* gene of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 49 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 132) of the DnaB helicase of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 50 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 133) of the *dnaG* gene of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 51 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 134) of the DnaG primase of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 52 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 135) of the *dnaC* gene of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 53 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 136) of the DnaC protein of *A. aeolicus*.

FIGURE 54A-B shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 137) of the *dnaE* gene of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 55 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 138) of the α subunit of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 56 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 139) of the *dnaQ* gene of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 57 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 140) of the ε subunit of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 58 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 141) of the *dnaX* gene of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 59 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 142) of the tau subunit of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 60 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 143) of the *dnaN* gene of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 61 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 144) of the β subunit of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 62 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 145) of the *holA* gene of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 63 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 146) of the δ subunit of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 64 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 147) of the *holB* gene of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 65 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 148) of the δ' subunit of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 66 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 149) of the *ssb* gene of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 67 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 150) of the single-strand binding protein of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 68 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 151) of the *dnaB* gene of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 69 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 152) of the DnaB helicase of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 70 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 153) of the *dnaG* gene of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 71 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 154) of the DnaG primase of *T. maritima*.

FIGURE 72 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 155) of the *holB* gene of *T. thermophilus*.

FIGURE 73 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 156) of the δ' subunit of *T. thermophilus*.

FIGURE 74 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 157) of the *holA* gene of *T. thermophilus*.

FIGURE 75 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 158) of the δ subunit of *T. thermophilus*.

FIGURE 76 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 171) of the *ssb* gene of *T. thermophilus*.

FIGURE 77 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 172) of the single-strand binding protein of *T. thermophilus*.

FIGURE 78 shows the partial nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 173) of the *dnaN* gene of *B. stearothermophilus*.

FIGURE 79 shows the partial amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 174) of the β subunit of *B. stearothermophilus*.

FIGURE 80 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 175) of the *ssb* gene of *B. stearothermophilus*.

FIGURE 81 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 176) of the single-strand binding protein of *B. stearothermophilus*.

FIGURE 82 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 177) of the *holA* gene of *B. stearothermophilus*.

FIGURE 83 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 178) of the δ subunit of *B. stearothermophilus*.

FIGURE 84 shows the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 179) of the *holB* gene of *B. stearothermophilus*.

FIGURE 85 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 180) of the δ' subunit of *B. stearothermophilus*.

FIGURES 86A-B show the partial nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 181) of the *dnaX* gene of *B. stearothermophilus*.

FIGURE 87 shows the partial amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 182) of the tau subunit of *B. stearothermophilus*.

FIGURES 88A-B show the nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 183) of the *polC* gene of *B. stearothermophilus*.

FIGURE 89 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 184) of the PolC or α-large subunit of *B. stearothermophilus*.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the present invention there may be employed conventional molecular biology, microbiology, and recombinant DNA techniques within the skill of the art. Such techniques are explained fully in the literature. See, e.g., Sambrook et al., "Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual" (1989); "Current Protocols in Molecular Biology" Volumes I-III (Ausubel, R. M., ed.) (1994); "Cell Biology: A Laboratory Handbook" Volumes I-III (Celis, J.E., ed.) (1994); "Current Protocols in Immunology" Volumes I-III (Coligan, J.E., ed.) (1994); "Oligonucleotide Synthesis" (M.J. Gait, ed.) (1984); "Nucleic Acid Hybridization" (B.D. Hames & S.J. Higgins, eds.) (1985); "Transcription And Translation" (B.D. Hames & S.J. Higgins, eds.) (1984); "Animal Cell Culture" (R.I. Freshney, ed.) (1986); "Immobilized Cells And Enzymes" (IRL Press) (1986); B. Perbal, "A Practical Guide To Molecular Cloning" (1984), each of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

Therefore, if appearing herein, the following terms shall have the definitions set out below.

The terms "DNA Polymerase III," "Polymerase III-type enzyme(s)", "Polymerase III enzyme complex(s)", "*T.th.* DNA Polymerase III", "*A.ae.* DNA Polymerase III", "*T.ma.*DNA Polymerase III", and any variants not specifically listed, may be used herein interchangeably, as are β subunit and sliding clamp and clamp as are also γ complex, clamp loader, and RFC, as used throughout the present application and claims refer to proteinaceous material including single or multiple proteins, and extends to those proteins having the amino acid sequence data described herein and presented in the Figures and corresponding Sequence Listing entries, and the corresponding profile of activities set forth herein and in the Claims. Accordingly, proteins displaying substantially equivalent or altered activity are likewise contemplated. These modifications may be deliberate, for example, such as modifications obtained through site-directed mutagenesis, or may be accidental, such as those obtained through mutations in hosts that are producers of the complex or its named subunits. Also, the terms "DNA Polymerase III," "*T.th.* DNA Polymerase III," and "γ and τ subunits", "ß subunit", "α subunit", "ε subunit", "δ subunit", "δ' subunit", "SSB protein", "sliding clamp" and "clamp loader" are intended to include within their scope proteins specifically recited herein as well as all substantially homologous analogs and allelic variations. As used herein γ complex refers to a particular type of clamp loader that includes a γ subunit.

Also as used herein, the term "thermolabile enzyme" refers to a DNA polymerase which is not resistant to inactivation by heat. For example, T5 DNA polymerase, the activity of which is totally inactivated by exposing the enzyme to a temperature of 90°C for 30 seconds, is considered to be a thermolabile DNA polymerase. As used herein, a thermolabile DNA polymerase is less resistant to heat inactivation than in a thermostable DNA polymerase. A thermolabile DNA polymerase typically will also have a lower optimum temperature than a thermostable DNA polymerase. Thermolabile DNA polymerases are typically isolated from mesophilic organisms, for example mesophilic bacteria or eukaryotes, including certain animals.

As used herein, the term "thermostable enzyme" refers to an enzyme which is stable to heat and is heat resistant and catalyzes (facilitates) combination of the nucleotides in the proper manner to form the primer extension products that are complementary to each nucleic acid strand. Generally, the synthesis will be initiated

at the 3' end of each primer and will proceed in the 5' direction along the templat strand, until synthesis terminates, producing molecules of different lengths.

The thermostable enzyme herein must satisfy a single criterion to be effective for the amplification reaction, i.e., the enzyme must not become irreversibly denatured (inactivated) when subjected to the elevated temperatures for the time necessary to effect denaturation of double-stranded nucleic acids. Irreversible denaturation for purposes herein refers to permanent and complete loss of enzymatic activity. The heating conditions necessary for denaturation will depend, e.g., on the buffer salt concentration and the length and nucleotide composition of the nucleic acids being denatured, but typically range from about 90C° to about 96°C for a time depending mainly on the temperature and the nucleic acid length, typically about 0.5 to four minutes. Higher temperatures may be tolerated as the buffer salt concentration and/or GC composition of the nucleic acid is increased. Preferably, the enzyme will not become irreversibly denatured at about 90°-100°C.

The thermostable enzymes herein preferably have an optimum temperature at which they function that is higher than about 40°C, which is the temperature below which hybridization of primer to template is promoted, although, depending on (1) magnesium and salt concentrations and (2) composition and length of primer, hybridization can occur at higher temperature (e.g., 45°-70°C). The higher the temperature optimum for the enzyme, the greater the specificity and/or selectivity of the primer-directed extension process. However, enzymes that are active below 40°C, e.g., at 37°C, are also within the scope of this invention provided they are heat-stable. Preferably, the optimum temperature ranges from about 50° to about 90°C, more preferably about 60° to about 80°C. In this connection, the term "elevated temperature" as used herein is intended to cover sustained temperatures of operation of the enzyme that are equal to or higher than about 60°C.

The term "template" as used herein refers to a double-stranded or single-stranded DNA molecule which is to be amplified, synthesized, or sequenced. In the case of a double-stranded DNA molecule, denaturation of its strands to form a first and a second strand is performed before these molecules may be amplified, synthesized or sequenced. A primer, complementary to a portion of a DNA template is hybridized under appropriate conditions and the DNA polymerase of the invention may then synthesize a DNA molecule complementary to said template or a portion thereof. The newly synthesized DNA molecule, according to the invention, may be

equal or shorter in length than the original DNA template. Mismatch incorporation during the synthesis or extension of the newly synthesized DNA molecule may result in one or a number of mismatched base pairs. Thus, the synthesized DNA molecule need not be exactly complementary to the DNA template.

The term "incorporating" as used herein means becoming a part of a DNA molecule or primer.

As used herein "amplification" refers to any *in vitro* method for increasing the number of copies of a nucleotide sequence, or its complimentary sequence, with the use of a DNA polymerase. Nucleic acid amplification results in the incorporation of nucleotides into a DNA molecule or primer thereby forming a new DNA molecule complementary to a DNA template. The formed DNA molecule and its template can be used as templates to synthesize additional DNA molecules. As used herein, one amplification reaction may consist of many rounds of DNA replication. DNA amplification reactions include, for example, polymerase chain reactions (PCR). One PCR reaction may consist of about 20 to 100 "cycles" of denaturation and synthesis of a DNA molecule. In this connection, the use of the term "long stretches of DNA" as it refers to the extension of primer along DNA is intended to cover such extensions of an average length exceeding 7 kilobases. Naturally, such length will vary, and all such variations are considered to be included within the scope of the invention.

As used herein, the term "holoenzyme" refers to a multi-subunit DNA polymerase activity comprising and resulting from various subunits which each may have distinct activities but which when contained in an enzyme reaction operate to carry out the function of the polymerase (typically DNA synthesis) and enhance its activity over use of the DNA polymerase subunit alone. For example, *E. coli* DNA polymerase III is a holoenzyme comprising three components of one or more subunits each: (1) a core component consisting of a heterotrimer of α, ε and θ subunits; (2) a β component consisting of a β subunit dimer; and (3) a γ complex component consisting of a heteropentamer of γ, δ, δ', χ and ψ subunits (see Studwell and O'Donnell, 1990). These three components, and the various subunits of which they consist, are linked non-covalently to form the DNA polymerase III holoenzyme complex. However, they also function when not linked in solution.

As used herein, "enzyme complex" refers to a protein structure consisting essentially of two or more subunits of a replication enzyme, which may or may not be identical, noncovalently linked to each other to form a multi-subunit structure. An enzyme complex according to this definition ideally will have a particular enzymatic activity, up to and including the activity of the replication enzyme. For example, a "DNA pol III enzyme complex" as used herein means a multi-subunit protein activity comprising two or more of the subunits of the DNA pol III replication enzyme as defined above, and having DNA polymerizing or synthesizing activity. Thus, this term encompasses the native replication enzyme, as well as an enzyme complex lacking one or more of the subunits of the replication enzyme (e.g., DNA pol III exo-, which lacks the ε subunit).

The amino acid residues described herein are preferred to be in the "L" isomeric form. However, residues in the "D" isomeric form can be substituted for any L-amino acid residue, as long as the desired functional property of immunoglobulin-binding is retained by the polypeptide. NH_2 refers to the free amino group present at the amino terminus of a polypeptide. COOH refers to the free carboxy group present at the carboxy terminus of a polypeptide. In keeping with standard polypeptide nomenclature, *J. Biol. Chem.*, 243:3552-59 (1969), abbreviations for amino acid residues are shown in the following Table of Correspondence:

TABLE OF CORRESPONDENCE

SYMBOLS		AMINO ACID
1-Letter	3-Letter	
Y	Tyr	tyrosine
G	Gly	glycine
F	Phe	phenylalanine
M	Met	methionine
A	Ala	alanine
S	Ser	serine
I	Ile	isoleucine
L	Leu	leucine
T	Thr	threonine
V	Val	valine
P	Pro	proline
K	Lys	lysine
H	His	histidine
Q	Gln	glutamine
E	Glu	glutamic acid
W	Trp	tryptophan

R	Arg	arginine
D	Asp	aspartic acid
N	Asn	asparagine
C	Cys	cysteine

It should be noted that all amino-acid residue sequences are represented herein by formulae whose left and right orientation is in the conventional direction of amino-terminus to carboxy-terminus. Furthermore, it should be noted that a dash at the beginning or end of an amino acid residue sequence indicates a peptide bond to a further sequence of one or more amino-acid residues. The above Table is presented to correlate the three-letter and one-letter notations which may appear alternately herein.

A "replicon" is any genetic element (e.g., plasmid, chromosome, virus) that functions as an autonomous unit of DNA replication *in vivo*; i.e., capable of replication under its own control.

A "vector" is a replicon, such as plasmid, phage or cosmid, to which another DNA segment may be attached so as to bring about the replication of the attached segment.

A "DNA molecule" refers to the polymeric form of deoxyribonucleotides (adenine, guanine, thymine, or cytosine) in its either single stranded form, or a double-stranded helix. This term refers only to the primary and secondary structure of the molecule, and does not limit it to any particular tertiary forms. Thus, this term includes double-stranded DNA found, *inter alia*, in linear DNA molecules (e.g., restriction fragments), viruses, plasmids, and chromosomes. In discussing the structure of particular double-stranded DNA molecules, sequences may be described herein according to the normal convention of giving only the sequence in the 5' to 3' direction along the nontranscribed strand of DNA (i.e., the strand having a sequence homologous to the mRNA).

An "origin of replication" refers to those DNA sequences that participate in DNA synthesis.

A DNA "coding sequence" is a double-stranded DNA sequence which is transcribed and translated into a polypeptide *in vivo* when placed under the control of appropriate regulatory sequences. The boundaries of the coding sequence are determined by a start codon at the 5' (amino) terminus and a translation stop codon at the 3' (carboxyl) terminus. A coding sequence can include, but is not limited to, prokaryotic sequences, cDNA from eukaryotic mRNA, genomic DNA sequences

from eukaryotic (e.g., mammalian) DNA, and even synthetic DNA sequences. A polyadenylation signal and transcription termination sequence will usually be located 3' to the coding sequence.

Transcriptional and translational control sequences are DNA regulatory sequences, such as promoters, enhancers, polyadenylation signals, terminators, and the like, that provide for the expression of a coding sequence in a host cell.

A "promoter sequence" is a DNA regulatory region capable of binding RNA polymerase in a cell and initiating transcription of a downstream (3' direction) coding sequence. For purposes of defining the present invention, the promoter sequence is bounded at its 3' terminus by the transcription initiation site and extends upstream (5' direction) to include the minimum number of bases or elements necessary to initiate transcription at levels detectable above background. Within the promoter sequence will be found a transcription initiation site (conveniently defined by mapping with nuclease S1), as well as protein binding domains (consensus sequences) responsible for the binding of RNA polymerase. Eukaryotic promoters will often, but not always, contain "TATA" boxes and "CAT" boxes. Prokaryotic promoters contain Shine-Dalgarno sequences in addition to the -10 and -35 consensus sequences.

An "expression control sequence" is a DNA sequence that controls and regulates the transcription and translation of another DNA sequence. A coding sequence is "under the control" of transcriptional and translational control sequences in a cell when RNA polymerase transcribes the coding sequence into mRNA, which is then translated into the protein encoded by the coding sequence.

A "signal sequence" can be included before the coding sequence. This sequence encodes a signal peptide, N-terminal to the polypeptide, that communicates to the host cell to direct the polypeptide to the cell surface or secrete the polypeptide into the media, and this signal peptide is clipped off by the host cell before the protein leaves the cell. Signal sequences can be found associated with a variety of proteins native to prokaryotes and eukaryotes.

The term "oligonucleotide," as used generally herein, such as in referring to probes prepared and used in the present invention, is defined as a molecule comprised of two or more (deoxy)ribonucleotides, preferably more than

three. Its exact size will depend upon many factors which, in turn, depend upon the ultimate function and use of the oligonucleotide.

The term "primer" as used herein refers to an oligonucleotide, whether occurring naturally as in a purified restriction digest or produced synthetically, which is capable of acting as a point of initiation of synthesis when placed under conditions in which synthesis of a primer extension product, which is complementary to a nucleic acid strand, is induced, i.e., in the presence of nucleotides and an inducing agent such as a DNA polymerase and at a suitable temperature and pH. The primer may be either single-stranded or double-stranded and must be sufficiently long to prime the synthesis of the desired extension product in the presence of the inducing agent. The exact length of the primer will depend upon many factors, including temperature, source of primer and use of the method. For example, for diagnostic applications, depending on the complexity of the target sequence, the oligonucleotide primer typically contains 15-25 or more nucleotides, although it may contain fewer nucleotides.

The primers herein are selected to be "substantially" complementary to different strands of a particular target DNA sequence. This means that the primers must be sufficiently complementary to hybridize with their respective strands. Therefore, the primer sequence need not reflect the exact sequence of the template. For example, a non-complementary nucleotide fragment may be attached to the 5' end of the primer, with the remainder of the primer sequence being complementary to the strand. Alternatively, non-complementary bases or longer sequences can be interspersed into the primer, provided that the primer sequence has sufficient complementarity with the sequence of the strand to hybridize therewith and thereby form the template for the synthesis of the extension product.

As used herein, the terms "restriction endonucleases" and "restriction enzymes" refer to bacterial enzymes, each of which cut double-stranded DNA at or near a specific nucleotide sequence.

A cell has been "transformed" by exogenous or heterologous DNA when such DNA has been introduced inside the cell. The transforming DNA may or may not be integrated (covalently linked) into chromosomal DNA making up the genome of the cell. In prokaryotes, yeast, and mammalian cells for example, the transforming DNA may be maintained on an episomal element such as a plasmid. With respect to eukaryotic cells, a stably transformed cell is one in which the

transforming DNA has become integrated into a chromosome so that it is inherited by daughter cells through chromosome replication. This stability is demonstrated by the ability of the eukaryotic cell to establish cell lines or clones comprised of a population of daughter cells containing the transforming DNA. A "clone" is a population of cells derived from a single cell or common ancestor by mitosis. A "cell line" is a clone of a primary cell that is capable of stable growth *in vitro* for many generations.

Two DNA sequences are "substantially homologous" when at least about 75% (preferably at least about 80%, and most preferably at least about 90 or 95%) of the nucleotides match over the defined length of the DNA sequences. Sequences that are substantially homologous can be identified by comparing the sequences using standard software available in sequence data banks, or in a Southern hybridization experiment under, for example, stringent conditions as defined for that particular system. Suitable conditions include those characterized by a hybridization buffer comprising 0.9M sodium citrate ("SSC") buffer at a temperature of about 37°C and washing in SSC buffer at a temperature of about 37°C; and preferably in a hybridization buffer comprising 20% formamide in 0.9M SSC buffer at a temperature of about 42°C and washing with 0.2x SSC buffer at about 42°C. Stringency conditions can be further varied by modifying the temperature and/or salt content of the buffer, or by modifying the length of the hybridization probe as is known to those of skill in the art. Defining appropriate hybridization conditions is within the skill of the art. See, e.g., Maniatis et al., 1982; Glover, 1985; Hames and Higgins, 1984.

It should be appreciated that also within the scope of the present invention are degenerate DNA sequences. By "degenerate" is meant that a different three-letter codon is used to specify a particular amino acid. It is well known in the art that the following codons can be used interchangeably to code for each specific amino acid:

Phenylalanine (Phe or F)	UUU or UUC
Leucine (Leu or L)	UUA or UUG or CUU or CUC or CUA or CUG
Isoleucine (Ile or I)	AUU or AUC or AUA
Methionine (Met or M)	AUG
Valine (Val or V)	GUU or GUC of GUA or GUG
Serine (Ser or S)	UCU or UCC or UCA or UCG or AGU or AGC

Proline (Pro or P)	CCU or CCC or CCA or CCG
Threonine (Thr or T)	ACU or ACC or ACA or ACG
Alanine (Ala or A)	GCU or GCG or GCA or GCG
Tyrosine (Tyr or Y)	UAU or UAC
Histidine (His or H)	CAU or CAC
Glutamine (Gln or Q)	CAA or CAG
Asparagine (Asn or N)	AAU or AAC
Lysine (Lys or K)	AAA or AAG
Aspartic Acid (Asp or D)	GAU or GAC
Glutamic Acid (Glu or E)	GAA or GAG
Cysteine (Cys or C)	UGU or UGC
Arginine (Arg or R)	CGU or CGC or CGA or CGG or AGA or AGG
Glycine (Gly or G)	GGU or GGC or GGA or GGG
Tryptophan (Trp or W)	UGG
Termination codon	UAA (ochre) or UAG (amber) or UGA (opal)

It should be understood that the codons specified above are for RNA sequences. The corresponding codons for DNA have a T substituted for U.

Mutations can be made, e.g., in SEQ. ID. No. 1, or any of the nucleic acids set forth herein, such that a particular codon is changed to a codon which codes for a different amino acid. Such a mutation is generally made by making the fewest nucleotide changes possible. A substitution mutation of this sort can be made to change an amino acid in the resulting protein in a non-conservative manner (i.e., by changing the codon from an amino acid belonging to a grouping of amino acids having a particular size or characteristic to an amino acid belonging to another grouping) or in a conservative manner (i.e., by changing the codon from an amino acid belonging to a grouping of amino acids having a particular size or characteristic to an amino acid belonging to the same grouping). Such a conservative change generally leads to less change in the structure and function of the resulting protein. A non-conservative change is more likely to alter the structure, activity or function of the resulting protein. The present invention should be considered to include sequences containing conservative changes which do not significantly alter the activity or binding characteristics of the resulting protein.

The following is one example of various groupings of amino acids:

Amino acids with nonpolar R groups

Alanine
Valine
Leucine
Isoleucine
Proline
Phenylalanine
Tryptophan
Methionine

Amino acids with uncharged polar R groups

Glycine
Serine
Threonine
Cysteine
Tyrosine
Asparagine
Glutamine

Amino acids with charged polar R groups (negatively charged at pH 6.0)

Aspartic acid
Glutamic acid

Basic amino acids (positively charged at pH 6.0)

Lysine
Arginine
Histidine (at pH 6.0)

Amino acids with phenyl groups:

Phenylalanine
Tryptophan
Tyrosine

Another grouping may be according to molecular weight (i.e., size of R groups):

Glycine	75
Alanine	89
Serine	105
Proline	115
Valine	117
Threonine	119
Cysteine	121
Leucine	131
Isoleucine	131
Asparagine	132
Aspartic acid	133
Glutamine	146
Lysine	146
Glutamic acid	147
Methionine	149
Histidine (at pH 6.0)	155
Phenylalanine	165
Arginine	174
Tyrosine	181
Tryptophan	204

Particularly preferred substitutions are:

- Lys for Arg and vice versa such that a positive charge may be maintained;
- Glu for Asp and vice versa such that a negative charge may be maintained;
- Ser for Thr such that a free -OH can be maintained; and
- Gln for Asn such that a free NH_2 can be maintained.

Amino acid substitutions may also be introduced to substitute an amino acid with a particularly preferable property. For example, a Cys may be introduced into a potential site for disulfide bridges with another Cys. A His may be introduced as a particularly "catalytic" site (i.e., His can act as an acid or base and is the most common amino acid in biochemical catalysis). Pro may be introduced because of its particularly planar structure, which induces β-turns in the protein's structure.

Two amino acid sequences are "substantially homologous" when at least about 70% of the amino acid residues (preferably at least about 80%, and most preferably at least about 90 or 95%) are identical, or represent conservative substitutions.

A "heterologous" region of the DNA construct is an identifiable segment of DNA within a larger DNA molecule that is not found in association with the larger molecule in nature. Thus, when the heterologous region encodes a mammalian gene, the gene will usually be flanked by DNA that does not flank the mammalian genomic DNA in the genome of the source organism. Another example of a heterologous coding sequence is a construct where the coding sequence itself is not found in nature (e.g., a cDNA where the genomic coding sequence contains introns, or synthetic sequences having codons different than the native gene). Allelic variations or naturally-occurring mutational events do not give rise to a heterologous region of DNA as defined herein.

An "antibody" is any immunoglobulin, including antibodies and fragments thereof, that binds a specific epitope. The term encompasses polyclonal, monoclonal, and chimeric antibodies, the last mentioned described in further detail in U.S. Patent Nos. 4,816,397 to Boss et al. and 4,816,567 to Cabilly et al.

An "antibody combining site" is that structural portion of an antibody molecule comprised of heavy and light chain variable and hypervariable regions that specifically binds antigen.

The phrase "antibody molecule" in its various grammatical forms as used herein contemplates both an intact immunoglobulin molecule and an immunologically active portion of an immunoglobulin molecule. Exemplary antibody molecules are intact immunoglobulin molecules, substantially intact immunoglobulin molecules and those portions of an immunoglobulin molecule that contains the paratope, including those portions known in the art as Fab, Fab', $F(ab')_2$ and F(v), which portions are preferred for use in the therapeutic methods described herein. Fab and $F(ab')_2$ portions of antibody molecules are prepared by the proteolytic reaction of papain and pepsin, respectively, on substantially intact antibody molecules by methods that are well-known. See for example, U.S. Patent No. 4,342,566 to Theofilopolous et al. Fab' antibody molecule portions are also well-known and are produced from $F(ab')_2$ portions followed by reduction of the disulfide bonds linking the two heavy chain portions as with mercaptoethanol, and followed by alkylation of

the resulting protein mercaptan with a reagent such as iodoacetamide. An antibody containing intact antibody molecules is preferred herein.

The phrase "monoclonal antibody" in its various grammatical forms refers to an antibody having only one species of antibody combining site capable of immunoreacting with a particular antigen. A monoclonal antibody thus typically displays a single binding affinity for any antigen with which it immunoreacts. A monoclonal antibody may therefore contain an antibody molecule having a plurality of antibody combining sites, each immunospecific for a different antigen; e.g., a bispecific (chimeric) monoclonal antibody.

A DNA sequence is "operatively linked" to an expression control sequence when the expression control sequence controls and regulates the transcription and translation of that DNA sequence. The term "operatively linked" includes having an appropriate start signal (e.g., ATG) in front of the DNA sequence to be expressed and maintaining the correct reading frame to permit expression of the DNA sequence under the control of the expression control sequence and production of the desired product encoded by the DNA sequence. If a gene that one desires to insert into a recombinant DNA molecule does not contain an appropriate start signal, such a start signal can be inserted in front of the gene.

The term "standard hybridization conditions" refers to salt and temperature conditions substantially equivalent to 5x SSC and 65°C for both hybridization and wash. However, one skilled in the art will appreciate that such "standard hybridization conditions" are dependent on particular conditions including the concentration of sodium and magnesium in the buffer, nucleotide sequence length and concentration, percent mismatch, percent formamide, and the like. Also important in the determination of "standard hybridization conditions" is whether the two sequences hybridizing are RNA-RNA, DNA-DNA or RNA-DNA. Such standard hybridization conditions are easily determined by one skilled in the art according to well known formulae, wherein hybridization is typically 10-20°C below the predicted or determined T_m with washes of higher stringency, if desired.

In its primary aspect, the present invention concerns the identification of a class of DNA Polymerase III-type enzymes or complexes found in thermophilic bacteria such as *Thermus thermophilus (T.th.), Aquifex aeolicus* (*A.ae.*), *Thermotoga maritima* (*T.ma.*), *Bacillus stearothermophilus* (*B.st.*) and other eubacteria which exhibit the following characteristics, among their properties: the ability to extend a

primer over a long stretch of ssDNA at elevated temperature, stimulation by its cognate sliding clamp of the type that is assembled on DNA by a clamp loader, accessory subunits that exhibit DNA-stimulated ATPase activity at elevated temperature and/or ionic strength, and an associated 3'-5' exonuclease activity. In a particular aspect, the invention extends to Polymerase III-type enzymes derived from a broad class of thermophilic eubacteria that include polymerases isolated from the thermophilic bacteria *Aquifex aeolicus* (*A.ae.* polymerase) and other members of the *Aquifex* genus; *Thermus thermophilus* (*T.th.* polymerase), *Thermus favus* (*Tfl/Tub* polymerase), *Thermus ruber* (*Tru* polymerase), *Thermus brockianus* (DYNAZYME™ polymerase) and other members of the *Thermus* genus; *Bacillus stearothermophilus* (*Bst* polymerase) and other members of the *Bacillus* genus; *Thermoplasma acidophilum* (*Tac* polymerase) and other members of the *Thermoplasma* genus; and *Thermotoga neapolitana* (*Tne* polymerase; *See* WO 96/10640 to Chatterjee et al.), *Thermotoga maritima* (*Tma* polymerase; *See* U.S. Patent No. 5,374,553 to Gelfand et al.), and other members of the *Thermotoga* genus. The particular polymerase discussed herein by way of illustration and not limitation, is the enzyme derived from *T.th.*, *A.ae.*, *T.ma.*, or *B.st.*

Polymerase III-type enzymes covered by the invention include those that may be prepared by purification from cellular material, as described in detail in the Examples *infra*, as well as enzyme assemblies or complexes that comprise the combination of individually prepared enzyme subunits or components. Accordingly, the entire enzyme may be prepared by purification from cellular material, or may be constructed by the preparation of the individual components and their assembly into the functional enzyme. A representative and non-limitative protocol for the preparation of an enzyme by this latter route is set forth in U.S. Patent No. 5,583,026 to O'Donnell, and the disclosure thereof is incorporated herein in its entirety for such purpose.

Likewise, individual subunits may be modified, e.g. as by incorporation therein of single residue substitutions to create active sites therein, for the purpose of imparting new or enhanced properties to enzymes containing the modified subunits (see, e.g., Tabor, 1995). Likewise, individual subunits prepared in accordance with the invention, may be used individually and for example, may be substituted for their counterparts in other enzymes, to improve or particularize the

properties of the resultant modified enzyme. Such modifications are within the skill of the art and are considered to be included within the scope of the present invention.

Accordingly, the invention includes the various subunits that may comprise the enzymes, and accordingly extends to the genes and corresponding proteins that may be encoded thereby, such as the α (as well as PolC), β, γ, ε, τ, δ and δ' subunits, respectively. More particularly, in *Thermus thermophilus* the α subunit corresponds to *dnaE*, the ß subunit corresponds to *dnaN*, the ε subunit corresponds to *dnaQ*, and the γ and τ subunits correspond to *dnaX*, the δ subunit corresponds to *holA*, and the δ' subunit corresponds to *holB*. In *Aquifex aeolicus* and *Thermotoga maritima*, the α subunit corresponds to *dnaE*, the β subunit corresponds to *dnaN*, the ε subunit corresponds to *dnaQ*, the τ subunit corresponds to *dnaX*, the δ subunit corresponds to *holA*, and the δ' subunit corresponds to *holB*. In *Bacillus stearothermophilus*, the PolC which has both α and ε activities corresponds to *polC*, the β subunit corresponds to *dnaN*, the ε subunit corresponds to *dnaQ*, the τ subunit corresponds to *dnaX*, the δ subunit corresponds to *holA*, and the δ' subunit corresponds to *holB*.

Accordingly, the Polymerase III-type enzyme of the present invention comprises at least one gene encoding a subunit thereof, which gene is selected from the group consisting of *dnaX*, *dnaQ*, *dnaE*, *dnaN*, *holA*, *holB*, and combinations thereof. More particularly, the invention extends to the nucleic acid molecule encoding them and their encoded subunits.

In the *T.th.* Pol III enzyme, this includes the following nucleotide sequences: *dnaX* (SEQ. ID. No. 3), *dnaE* (SEQ. ID. No. 86), *dnaQ* (SEQ. ID. No. 94), *dnaN* (SEQ. ID. No. 106), *holA* (SEQ. ID. No. 157), and *holB* (SEQ. ID. No. 155).

In the *A.ae.* Pol III enzyme, this includes the following nucleotide sequences: *dnaX* (SEQ. ID. No. 119), *dnaE* (SEQ. ID. No. 117), *dnaQ* (SEQ. ID. No. 127), *dnaN* (SEQ. ID. No. 121), *holA* (SEQ. ID. No. 123), and *holB* (SEQ. ID. No. 125).

In the *T.ma.* Pol III enzyme, this includes the following nucleotide sequences: *dnaX* (SEQ. ID. No. 141), *dnaE* (SEQ. ID. No. 137), *dnaQ* (SEQ. ID. No. 139), *dnaN* (SEQ. ID. No. 143), *holA* (SEQ. ID. No. 145), and *holB* (SEQ. ID. No. 147).

In the *B.st.* Pol III enzyme, this includes the following nucleotide sequences: *dnaX* (SEQ. ID. No. 181), *dnaN* (SEQ. ID. No. 173), *holA* (SEQ. ID. No. 177), *holB* (SEQ. ID. No. 179), and *polC* (SEQ. ID. Nos. 183).

In each of the Pol III type enzymes of the present invention, not only are each of the above-identified coding sequences contemplated, but also conserved variants, active fragments and analogs thereof.

A particular *T.th.* Polymerase III-type enzyme in accordance with the invention may include at least one of the following sub-units: a γ subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. Nos. 4 and 5; a τ subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 2; a ε subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 95; a α subunit including an amino acid sequence corresponding SEQ. ID. No. 87; a β subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 107; a δ subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 158; a δ' subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 156; as well as variants, including allelic variants, muteins, analogs and fragments of any of the subunits, and compatible combinations thereof, capable of functioning in DNA amplification and sequencing.

A particular *A.ae.* Polymerase III-type enzyme in accordance with the invention may include at least one of the following sub-units: a τ subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 120; a ε subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 128; a α subunit including an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 118; a ß subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 122; a δ subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 124; a δ' subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 126; as well as variants, including allelic variants, muteins, analogs and fragments of any of the subunits, and compatible combinations thereof, capable of functioning in DNA amplification and sequencing.

A particular *T.ma.* Polymerase III-type enzyme in accordance with the invention may include at least one of the following sub-units: a τ subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 142; a ε subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 140; a α subunit including an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 138; a ß subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 144; a δ subunit having an amino acid

sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 146; a δ' subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 148; as well as variants, including allelic variants, muteins, analogs and fragments of any of the subunits, and compatible combinations thereof, capable of functioning in DNA amplification and sequencing.

A particular *B.st.* Polymerase III-type enzyme in accordance with the invention may include at least one of the following subunits: a τ subunit having a partial amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 182; a β subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ ID. No. 174; a δ subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 178; a δ' subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. No. 180; a PolC subunit having an amino acid sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID. Nos. 184; as well as variants, including allelic variants, muteins, analogs and fragments of any of the subunits, and compatible combinations thereof, capable of functioning in DNA amplification and sequencing.

The invention also includes and extends to the use and application of the enzyme and/or one or more of its components for DNA molecule amplification and sequencing by the methods set forth hereinabove, and in greater detail later on herein.

One of the subunits of the invention is the *T.th.* γ/τ subunit encoded by a *dnaX* gene, which frameshifts as much as -2 with high efficiency, and that, upon frameshifting, leads to the addition of more than one extra amino acid residue to the C-terminus (to form the γ subunit). Further, the invention likewise extends to a *dnaX* gene derived from a thermophile such as *T.th.*, that possesses the frameshift defined herein and that codes for expression of the γ and τ subunits of DNA Polymerase III.

The present invention provides methods for amplifying or sequencing a nucleic acid molecule comprising contacting the nucleic acid molecule with a composition comprising a DNA polymerase III enzyme (DNA pol III) complex (for sequencing, preferably a DNA pol III complex that is substantially reduced in 3'-5' exonuclease activity). DNA pol III complexes used in the methods of the present invention are thermostable.

The invention also provides DNA molecules amplified by the present methods, methods of preparing a recombinant vector comprising inserting a DNA

molecule amplified by the present methods into a vector, which is preferably an expression vector, and recombinant vectors prepared by these methods.

The invention also provides methods of preparing a recombinant host cell comprising inserting a DNA molecule amplified by the present methods into a host cell, which preferably a bacterial cell, most preferably an *Escherichia coli* cell; a yeast cell; or an animal cell, most preferably an insect cell, a nematode cell or a mammalian cell. The invention also provides and recombinant host cells prepared by these methods.

In additional preferred embodiments, the present invention provides kits for amplifying or sequencing a nucleic acid molecule. DNA amplification kits according to the invention comprise a carrier means having in close confinement therein two or more container means, wherein a first container means contains a DNA polymerase III enzyme complex and a second container means contains a deoxynucleoside triphosphate. DNA sequencing kits according to the present invention comprise a multi-protein Pol III-type enzyme complex and a second container means contains a dideoxynucleoside triphosphate. The DNA pol III contained in the container means of such kits is preferably substantially reduced in 5'-3' exonuclease activity, may be thermostable, and may be isolated from the thermophilic cellular sources described above.

DNA pol III-type enzyme complexes for use in the present invention may be isolated from any organism that produced the DNA pol III-type enzyme complexes naturally or recombinantly. Such enzyme complexes may be thermostable, isolated from a variety of thermophilic organisms.

The thermostable DNA polymerase III-type enzymes or complexes that are an important aspect of this invention, may be isolated from a variety of thermophilic bacteria that are available commercially (for example, from American Type Culture Collection, Rockville, Maryland). Suitable for use as sources of thermostable enzymes are the thermophilic eubacteria *Aquifex aeolicus* and other species of the *Aquifex* genus; *Thermus aquaticus, Thermus thermophilus, Thermus flavus, Thermus ruber, Thermus brockianus,* and other species of the *Thermus* genus; *Bacillus stearothermophilus, Bacillus subtilis,* and other species of the *Bacillus* genus; *Thermoplasma acidophilum* and other species of the *Thermoplasma* genus; *Thermotoga neapolitana, Thermotoga maritima* and other species of the *Thermotoga* genus; and mutants of each of these species. It will be understood by one of ordinary

skill in the art, however, that any thermophilic microorganism might be used as a source of thermostable DNA pol III-type enzymes and polypeptides for use in the methods of the present invention. Bacterial cells may be grown according to standard microbiological techniques, using culture media and incubation conditions suitable for growing active cultures of the particular thermophilic species that are well-known to one of ordinary skill in the art (see, e.g., Brock et al., 1969; Oshima et al., 1974). Thermostable DNA pol III complexes may then be isolated from such thermophilic cellular sources as described for thermolabile complexes above.

Several methods are available for identifying homologous nucleic acids and protein subunits in other thermophilic eubacteria, either those listed above or otherwise. These methods include the following:

(1) The following procedure was used to obtain the genes encoding *T.th.* ε (*dnaQ*), τ/γ (*dnaX*), DnaA (*dnaA*), and β (*dnaN*). Protein sequences encoded by genes of non-thermophilic bacteria (i.e., mesophiles) are aligned to identify highly conserved amino acid sequences. PCR primers at conserved positions are designed using the codon usage of the organism of interest to amplify an internal section of the gene from genomic DNA extracted from the organism. The PCR product is sequenced. New primers are designed near the ends of the sequence to obtain new sequence that flanks the ends using circular PCR (also called inversed PCR) on genomic DNA that has been cut with the appropriate restriction enzyme and ligated into circles. These new PCR products are sequenced. The procedure is repeated until the entire gene sequence has been obtained. Also, *dnaN* (encoding β) is located next to *dnaA* in bacteria and, therefore, *dnaN* can be obtained by cloning DNA flanking the *dnaA* gene by the circular PCR procedure starting within *dnaA*. Once the gene is obtained, it is cloned into an expression vector for protein production.

(2) The following procedure was used to obtain the genes encoding *T.th* α polymerase (*dnaE* gene). The DNA polymerase III can be purified directly from the organism of interest and amino acid sequence of the subunit(s) obtained directly. In the case of *T.th.*, *T.th.* cells were lysed and proteins were fractionated. An antibody against *E. coli* α was used to probe column fractions by Western analysis, which reacted with *T.th.* α. The *T.th.* α was transferred to a membrane, proteolyzed, and fragments were sequenced. The sequence was used to design PCR primers for

amplification of an internal section of the *dnaE* gene. Remaining flanking sequences are then obtained by circular PCR.

(3) The following procedure can be used to identify published nucleictide sequences which have not yet been identified as to their function. This method was used to obtain *T.th.* δ (*holA*) and δ' (*holB*), although they could presumably also have been obtained via Methods 1 and 2 above. Discovery of *T.th. dnaE* (α), *dnaN* (β) and *dnaX* (τ/γ) indicates that thermophiles use a class III type of DNA polymerase (α) that utilize a clamp (β) and must also use a clamp loader since they have τ/γ. Also, the biochemical experiments in the Examples *infra* show that the *T.th.* polymerase functions with the *T.th.* β clamp. Having demonstrated that a thermophile (e.g., *T.th.*) does indeed utilize a class III type of polymerase with a clamp and clamp loader, it can be assumed that they may have δ and δ' subunits needed to form a complex with τ/γ for functional clamp loading activity (i.e., as shown in *E. coli*, δ and δ' bind either τ or γ to form τδδ' or γδδ' complex, both of which are functional clamp loaders). The δ subunit is not very well conserved, but does give a match in the sequence databases for *A.ae.*, *T.ma*, and *T.th.* The *T.th.* database provided limited information on the amino acid sequence of δ subunit, although one can easily obtain the complete sequence of *T.th. holA* by PCR and circular PCR as outlined above in Method 1. The *A.ae.* and *T.ma.* databases are complete and, therefore, the entire *holA* sequence from these genomes are identified. Neither database recognized these sequences as δ encoded by *holA*. The δ' subunit (*holB*) is fairly well conserved. Again the incomplete *T.th.* database provided limited δ' sequence, but as with δ, it is a straight forward process for anyone experienced in the area to obtain the rest of the *holB* sequence using PCR and circular PCR as described in Method 1. Neither the *A.ae.* nor *T.ma.* databases recognized *holB* encoding δ'. Nevertheless, *holB* was identified as encoding δ' by searching the databases with δ' sequence. In each case, the *Thermatoga maritima* and *Aquifex aeolicus holB* gene and δ' sequence were obtained in their entirety. Neither database had previously annotated *holA* or *holB* encoding δ and δ'.

As stated above and in accordance with the present invention, once nucleic acid molecules have been obtained, they may be amplified according to any of the literature-described manual or automated amplification methods. Such methods includes, but are not limited to, PCR (U.S. Patent No. 4,683,195 to Mullis et al. and U.S. Patent No. 4,683,202 to Mullis), Strand Displacement Amplification (SDA)

(U.S. Patent No. 5,455,166 to Walker), and Nucleic Acid Sequence-Based Amplification (NASBA) (U.S. Patent No. 5,409,818 to Davey et al.; EP 329,822 to Davey et al.). Most preferably, nucleic acid molecules are amplified by the methods of the present invention using PCR-based amplification techniques.

In the initial steps of each of these amplification methods, the nucleic acid molecule to be amplified is contacted with a composition comprising a DNA polymerase belonging to the evolutionary "family A" class (e.g., *Taq* DNA pol I or *E. coli* pol I) or the "family "B" class (e.g., Vent and *Pfu* DNA polymerases -- see Ito and Braithwaite, 1991). All of these DNA polymerases are present as single subunits and are primarily involved in DNA repair. In contrast, the DNA pol III-type enzymes are multisubunit complexes that mainly function in the replication of the chromosome, and the subunit containing the DNA polymerase activity is in the "family C" class.

Thus, in amplifying a nucleic acid molecule according to the methods of the present invention, the nucleic acid molecule is contacted with a composition comprising a thermostable DNA pol III-type enzyme complex.

Once the nucleic acid molecule to be amplified is contacted with the DNA pol III-type complex, the amplification reaction may proceed according to standard protocols for each of the above-described techniques. Since most of these techniques comprise a high-temperature denaturation step, if a thermolabile DNA pol III-type enzyme complex is used in nucleic acid amplification by any of these techniques the enzyme would need to be added at the start of each amplification cycle, since it would be heat-inactivated at the denaturation step. However, a thermostable DNA pol III-type complex used in these methods need only be added once at the start of the amplification (as for *Taq* DNA polymerase in traditional PCR amplifications), as its activity will be unaffected by the high temperature of the denaturation step. It should be noted, however, that because DNA pol III-type enzymes may have a much more rapid rate of nucleotide incorporation than the polymerases commonly used in these amplification techniques, the cycle times may need to be adjusted to shorter intervals than would be standard.

In an alternative preferred embodiment, the invention provides methods of extending primers for several kilobases, a reaction that is central to amplifying large nucleic acid molecules, by a technique commonly referred to as "long chain PCR" (Barnes, 1994; Cheng, 1994).

In such a method the target primed DNA can contain a single strand stretch of DNA to be copied into the double strand form of several or tens of kilobases. The reaction is performed in a suitable buffer, preferably Tris, at a pH of between 5.5 - 9.5, preferably 7.5. The reaction also contains $MgCl_2$ in the range 1 mM to 10 mM, preferably 8 mM, and may contain a suitable salt such as NaCl, KCl or sodium or potassium acetate. The reaction also contains ATP in the range of 20 μM to 1 mM, preferably 0.5 mM, that is needed for the clamp loader to assemble the clamp onto the primed template, and a sufficient concentration of deoxynucleoside triphosphates in the range of 50μM to 0.5 mM, preferably 60 μM for chain extension. The reaction contains a sliding clamp, such as the ß subunit, in the range of 20ng to 200 ng, preferably 100 ng, for action as a clamp to stimulate the DNA polymerase. The chain extension reaction contains a DNA polymerase and a clamp loader, that could be added either separately or as a single Pol III* -like particle, preferably as a Pol III* like particle that contains the DNA polymerase and clamp loading activities. The Pol III-type enzyme is added preferably at a concentrations of about 0.0002-200 units per milliliter, about 0.002-100 units per milliliter, about 0.2-50 units per milliliter, and most preferably about 2-50 units per milliliter. The reaction is incubated at elevated temperature, preferably 60°C or more, and could include other proteins to enhance activity such as a single strand DNA binding protein.

In another preferred embodiment, the invention provides methods of extending primers on linear templates in the absence of the clamp loader. In this reaction, the primers are annealled to the linear DNA, preferably at the ends such as in standard PCR applications. The reaction is performed in a suitable buffer, preferably Tris, at a pH of between 5.5 - 9.5, preferably 7.5. The reaction also contains $MgCl_2$ in the range of 1 mM to 10 mM, preferably 8 mM, and may contain a suitable salt such as NaCl, KCl or sodium or potassium acetate. The reaction also contains a sufficient concentration of deoxynucleoside triphosphates in the range of 50μM to 0.5 mM, preferably 60 μM for chain extension. The reaction contains a sliding clamp, such as the ß subunit, in the range of 20ng to 20 μg, preferably about 2 μg, for ability to slide on the end of the DNA and associate with the polymerase for action as a clamp to stimulate the DNA polymerase. The chain extension reaction also contains a Pol III-type polymerase subunit such as α, core, or a Pol III* -like particle. The Pol III-type enzyme is added preferably at a concentrations of about 0.0002-200 units per

milliliter, about 0.002-100 units per milliliter, about 0.2-50 units per milliliter, and most preferably about 2-50 units per milliliter. The reaction is incubated at elevated temperature, preferably 60°C or more, and could include other proteins to enhance activity such as a single strand DNA binding protein.

The methods of the present invention thus will provide high-fidelity amplified copies of a nucleic acid molecule in a more rapid fashion than traditional amplification methods using the repair-type enzymes.

These amplified nucleic acid molecules may then be manipulated according to standard recombinant DNA techniques. For example, a nucleic acid molecule amplified according to the present methods may be inserted into a vector, which is preferably an expression vector, to produce a recombinant vector comprising the amplified nucleic acid molecule. This vector may then be inserted into a host cell, where it may, for example, direct the host cell to produce a recombinant polypeptide encoded by the amplified nucleic acid molecule. Methods for inserting nucleic acid molecules into vectors, and inserting these vectors into host cells, are well-known to one of ordinary skill in the art (see, e.g., Maniatis, 1992).

Alternatively, the amplified nucleic acid molecules may be directly inserted into a host cell, where it may be incorporated into the host cell genome or may exist as an extrachromosomal nucleic acid molecule, thereby producing a recombinant host cell. Methods for introduction of a nucleic acid molecule into a host cell, including calcium phosphate transfection, DEAE-dextran mediated transfection, cationic lipid-mediated transfection, electroporation, transduction, infection or other methods, are described in many standard laboratory manuals (see, e.g., Davis, 1986).

For each of the above techniques wherein an amplified nucleic acid molecule is introduced into a host cell via a vector or via direct introduction, preferred host cells include but are not limited to a bacterial cell, a yeast cell, or an animal cell. Bacterial host cells preferred in the present invention are *E. coli, Bacillus* spp., *Streptomyces* spp., *Erwinia* spp., *Klebsiella* spp. and *Salmonella typhimurium*. Preferred as a host cell is *E. coli,* and particularly preferred are *E. coli* strains DH10B and Stbl2, which are available commercially (Life Technologies, Inc. Gaithersburg, Maryland). Preferred animal host cells are insect cells, nematode cells and mammalian cells. Insect host cells preferred in the present invention are *Drosophila* spp. cells, *Spodoptera* Sf9 and Sf21 cells, and *Trichoplusa* High-Five cells, each of which is available commercially (e.g., from Invitrogen; San Diego, California).

Preferred nematode host cells are those derived from *C. elegans*, and preferred mammalian host cells are those derived from rodents, particularly rats, mice or hamsters, and primates, particularly monkeys and humans. Particularly preferred as mammalian host cells are CHO cells, COS cells and VERO cells.

By the present invention, nucleic acid molecules may be sequenced according to any of the literature-described manual or automated sequencing methods. Such methods include, but are not limited to, dideoxy sequencing methods such as "Sanger sequencing" (Sanger and Coulson, 1975; Sanger et al., 1977; U.S. Patent No. 4,962,022 to Fleming et al.; and U.S. Patent No. 5,498,523 to Tabor et al.), as well as more complex PCR-based nucleic acid fingerprinting techniques such as Random Amplified Polymorphic DNA (RAPD) analysis (Williams et al., 1990). Arbitrarily Primed PCR (AP-PCR) (Welsh and McClelland, 1990), DNA Amplification Fingerprinting (DAF) (Caetano-Anollés, 1991), microsatellite PCR or Directed Amplification of Minisatellite-region DNA (DAMD) (Heath et al., 1993), and Amplification Fragment Length Polymorphism (AFLP) analysis (EP 534,858 to Vos et al.; Vos et al., 1995; Lin and Kuo, 1995).

As described above for amplification methods, the nucleic acid molecule to be sequenced by these methods is typically contacted with a composition comprising a type A or type B DNA polymerase. By contrast, in sequencing a nucleic acid molecule according to the methods of the present invention, the nucleic acid molecule is contacted with a composition comprising a thermostable DNA pol III-type enzyme complex instead of necessarily using a DNA polymerase of the family A or B classes. As for amplification methods, the DNA pol III-type complexes used in the nucleic acid sequencing methods of the present invention are preferably substantially reduced in 3'-5' exonuclease activity; most preferable for use in the present methods is a DNA polymerase III-type complex which lacks the ε subunit. DNA pol III-type complexes used for nucleic acid sequencing according to the present methods are used at the same preferred concentration ranges described above for long chain extension of primers.

Once the nucleic acid molecule to be sequenced is contacted with the DNA pol III complex, the sequencing reactions may proceed according to the protocols disclosed in the above-referenced techniques.

As discussed above, the invention extends to kits for use in nucleic acid amplification or sequencing utilizing DNA polymerase III-type enzymes

according to the present methods. A DNA amplification kit according to the present invention may comprise a carrier means, such as vials, tubes, bottles and the like. A first such container means may contain a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme complex, and a second such container means may contain a deoxynucleoside triphosphate. The amplification kit encompassed by this aspect of the present invention may further comprise additional reagents and compounds necessary for carrying out standard nucleic amplification protocols (See U.S. Patent No. 4,683,195 to Mullis et al. and U.S. Patent No. 4,683,202 to Mullis, which are directed to methods of DNA amplification by PCR).

Similarly, a DNA sequencing kit according to the present invention comprises a carrier means having in close confinement therein two or more container means, such as vials, tubes, bottles and the like. A first such container means may contain a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme complex, and a second such container means may contain a dideoxynucleoside triphosphate. The sequencing kit may further comprise additional reagents and compounds necessary for carrying out standard nucleic sequencing protocols, such as pyrophosphatase, agarose or polyacrylamide media for formulating sequencing gels, and other components necessary for detection of sequenced nucleic acids (See U.S. Patent No. 4,962,020 to Fleming et al. and U.S. Patent No. 5,498,523 to Tabor et al., which are directed to methods of DNA sequencing).

The DNA polymerase III-type complex contained in the first container means of the amplification and sequencing kits provided by the invention is preferably a thermostable DNA polymerase III-type enzyme complex and more preferably a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme complex that is reduced in 3-5' exonuclease activity. Naturally, the foregoing methods and kits are presented as illustrative and not restrictive of the use and application of the enzymes of the invention for DNA molecule amplification and sequencing. Likewise, the applications of specific embodiments of the enzymes, including conserved variants and active fragments thereof are considered to be disclosed and included within the scope of the invention.

As discussed earlier, individual subunits could be modified to customize enzyme construction and corresponding use and activity. For example, the region of α that interacts with ß could be subcloned onto another DNA polymerase, thereby causing ß to enhance the activity of the recombinant polymerase.

Alternatively, the ß clamp could be modified to function with another protein or enzyme thereby enhancing its activity or acting to localize its action to a particular targeted DNA. Finally, the polymerase active site could be modified to enhance its action, for example changing Tyrosine enabling more equal site stoppage with the four ddNTPs (Tabor et al., 1995). This represents a particular non-limiting illustration of the scope and practice of the present invention with reference to the utility of individual subunits hereof.

Accordingly and as stated above, the present invention also relates to a recombinant DNA molecule or cloned gene, or a degenerate variant thereof, which encodes any one or all of the subunits of the DNA Polymerase III-type enzymes of the present invention, or active fragments thereof. In the instance of the τ subunit, a predicted molecular weight of about 58 kD and an amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID Nos. 4 or 5 is comprehended; preferably a nucleic acid molecule, in particular a recombinant DNA molecule or cloned gene, encoding the 58 kD subunit of the Polymerase III of the invention, that has a nucleotide sequence or is complementary to a DNA sequence shown in FIGURES 4A and 4B (SEQ ID No. 1), and the coding region for *dnaX* set forth in FIGURE 4C (SEQ ID No. 3). The γ subunit is smaller, and is approximately 50 kD, depending upon the extent of the frameshift that occurs. More particularly, and as set forth in FIGURE 4E (SEQ ID No. 4), the γ subunit defined by a -1 frameshift possesses a molecular weight of 50.8 kD, while the γ subunit defined by a -2 frameshift, set forth in FIGURE 4F (SEQ ID No. 5), possesses a molecular weight of 49.8 kD.

As discussed above, the invention also extends to the genes including *holA, holB, dnaX, dnaQ, dnaE,* and *dnaN* from thermophilic eubacteria (i.e., *T.th.* and *A.ae.*) that have been isolated and/or purified, to corresponding vectors for the genes, and particularly, to the vectors disclosed herein, and to host cells including such vectors. In this connection, probes have been prepared which hybridize to the DNA polymerase III-type enzymes of the present invention, and which are selected from the various oligonucleotide probes or primers set forth in the present application. These include, without limitation, the oligonucleotide defined in SEQ ID No. 6 the oligonucleotide defined in SEQ ID No. 8 the oligonucleotide defined in SEQ ID No. 10 the oligonucleotide defined in SEQ ID No. 11 the oligonucleotide defined in SEQ ID No. 12 the oligonucleotide defined in SEQ ID No. 13 the oligonucleotide defined

in SEQ ID No. 14 the oligonucleotide defined in SEQ ID No. 15, and the oligonucleotide defined in SEQ ID No. 16.

The methods of the invention include a method for producing a recombinant thermostable DNA polymerase III-type enzyme from a thermophilic bacterium, such as *T.th.*, *A.ae.*, *Th.ma.*, or *B.st.* which comprises culturing a host cell transformed with a vector of the invention under conditions suitable for the expression of the present DNA polymerase III. Another method includes a method for isolating a target DNA fragment consisting essentially of a DNA coding for a thermostable DNA polymerase III-type enzyme from a thermophilic bacterium comprising the steps of:

(a) forming a genomic library from the bacterium;

(b) transforming or transfecting an appropriate host cell with the library of step (a);

(c) contacting DNA from the transformed or transfected host cell with a DNA probe which hybridizes to a DNA fragment selected from the group consisting of the DNA fragments defined in SEQ ID No. 6 and the DNA fragments defined in SEQ ID No. 8 or the oligonucleotides set forth above; wherein hybridization is conducted under the following conditions:

i) hybridization: 1% crystalline BSA (fraction V) (Sigma), 1 mM EDTA, 0.5 M NaHPO4 (pH 7.2), 7% SDS at 65°C for 12 hours and;

ii) wash: 5 x 20 minutes with wash buffer consisting of 0.5% BSA, fraction V), 1mM Na2EDTA, 40 mM NaHPO4 (pH 7.2), and 5% SDS;

(d) assaying the transformed or transfected cell of step (c) which hybridizes to the DNA probe for DNA polymerase III-type activity; and

(e) isolating a target DNA fragment which codes for the thermostable DNA polymerase III-type enzyme.

Also, antibodies including both polyclonal and monoclonal antibodies, and the DNA Polymerase III-like enzyme complex and/or their γ and τ subunits, α subunit(s), δ subunit, δ' subunit, β subunit, ε subunit may be used in the preparation of the enzymes of the present invention as well as other enzymes of similar thermophilic origin. For example, the DNA Polymerase III-type complex or its subunits may be used to produce both polyclonal and monoclonal antibodies to themselves in a variety of cellular media, by known techniques such as the hybridoma technique utilizing, for example, fused mouse spleen lymphocytes and myeloma cells.

The general methodology for making monoclonal antibodies by hybridomas is well known. Immortal, antibody-producing cell lines can also be created by techniques other than fusion, such as direct transformation of B lymphocytes with oncogenic DNA, or transfection with Epstein-Barr virus. See, e.g., Schreier et al., 1980; Hammerling et al., 1981; Kennett et al., 1980; see also U.S. Patent No. 4,341,761 to Ganfield et al.; U.S. Patent No. 4,399,121 to Albarella et al.; U.S. Patent No. 4,427,783 to Newman et al.; U.S. Patent No. 4,444,887 to Hoffman; U.S. Patent No. 4,451,570 to Royston et al.; U.S. Patent No. 4,466,917 to Nussenzweig et al.; U.S. Patent No. 4,472,500 to Milstein et al.; U.S. Patent No. 4,491,632 to Wands et al.; and U.S. Patent No. 4,493,890 to Morris.

Methods for producing polyclonal anti-polypeptide antibodies are well-known in the art. See U.S. Patent No. 4,493,795 to Nestor et al. A monoclonal antibody, typically containing Fab and/or $F(ab')_2$ portions of useful antibody molecules, can be prepared using the hybridoma technology described in *Antibodies - A Laboratory Manual*, Harlow and Lane, eds., Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, New York (1988), which is incorporated herein by reference. Briefly, to form the hybridoma from which the monoclonal antibody composition is produced, a myeloma or other self-perpetuating cell line is fused with lymphocytes obtained from the spleen of a mammal hyperimmunized with an elastin-binding portion thereof.

A monoclonal antibody useful in practicing the present invention can be produced by initiating a monoclonal hybridoma culture comprising a nutrient medium containing a hybridoma that secretes antibody molecules of the appropriate antigen specificity. The culture is maintained under conditions and for a time period sufficient for the hybridoma to secrete the antibody molecules into the medium. The antibody-containing medium is then collected. The antibody molecules can then be further isolated by well-known techniques.

Media useful for the preparation of these compositions are both well-known in the art and commercially available and include synthetic culture media, inbred mice and the like. An exemplary synthetic medium is Dulbecco's minimal essential medium (DMEM) (Dulbecco et al., 1959) supplemented with 4.5 gm/l glucose, 20 mm glutamine, and 20% fetal calf serum. An exemplary inbred mouse strain is the Balb/c.

Another feature of this invention is the expression of the DNA sequences disclosed herein. As is well known in the art, DNA sequences may be

expressed by operatively linking them to an expression control sequence in an appropriate expression vector and employing that expression vector to transform an appropriate unicellular host.

Such operative linking of a DNA sequence of this invention to an expression control sequence, of course, includes, if not already part of the DNA sequence, the provision of an initiation codon, ATG, in the correct reading frame upstream of the DNA sequence.

A wide variety of host/expression vector combinations may be employed in expressing the DNA sequences of this invention. Useful expression vectors, for example, may consist of segments of chromosomal, non-chromosomal and synthetic DNA sequences. Suitable vectors include derivatives of SV40 and known bacterial plasmids, e.g., *E. coli* plasmids col El, pCR1, pBR322, pMB9 and their derivatives, plasmids such as RP4; phage DNAS, e.g., the numerous derivatives of phage λ, e.g., NM989, and other phage DNA, e.g., M13 and filamentous single stranded phage DNA; yeast plasmids such as the 2μ plasmid or derivatives thereof; vectors useful in eukaryotic cells, such as vectors useful in insect or mammalian cells; vectors derived from combinations of plasmids and phage DNAs, such as plasmids that have been modified to employ phage DNA or other expression control sequences; and the like.

Any of a wide variety of expression control sequences -- sequences that control the expression of a DNA sequence operatively linked to it -- may be used in these vectors to express the DNA sequences of this invention. Such useful expression control sequences include, for example, the early or late promoters of SV40, CMV, vaccinia, polyoma or adenovirus, the *lac* system, the *trp* system, the *TAC* system, the *TRC* system, the *LTR* system, the major operator and promoter regions of phage λ, the control regions of fd coat protein, the promoter for 3-phosphoglycerate kinase or other glycolytic enzymes, the promoters of acid phosphatase (e.g., Pho5), the promoters of the yeast α-mating factors, and other sequences known to control the expression of genes of prokaryotic or eukaryotic cells or their viruses, and various combinations thereof.

A wide variety of unicellular host cells are also useful in expressing the DNA sequences of this invention. These hosts may include well known eukaryotic and prokaryotic hosts, such as strains of *E. coli*, *Pseudomonas*, *Bacillus*,

Streptomyces, fungi such as yeasts, and animal cells, such as CHO, Rl.l, B-W and L-M cells, African Green Monkey kidney cells (e.g., COS 1, COS 7, BSC1, BSC40, and BMT10), insect cells (e.g., Sf9), and human cells and plant cells in tissue culture.

It will be understood that not all vectors, expression control sequences and hosts will function equally well to express the DNA sequences of this invention. Neither will all hosts function equally well with the same expression system. However, one skilled in the art will be able to select the proper vectors, expression control sequences, and hosts without undue experimentation to accomplish the desired expression without departing from the scope of this invention. For example, in selecting a vector, the host must be considered because the vector must function in it. The vector's copy number, the ability to control that copy number, and the expression of any other proteins encoded by the vector, such as antibiotic markers, will also be considered.

In selecting an expression control sequence, a variety of factors will normally be considered. These include, for example, the relative strength of the system, its controllability, and its compatibility with the particular DNA sequence or gene to be expressed, particularly with regard to potential secondary structures. Suitable unicellular hosts will be selected by consideration of, e.g., their compatibility with the chosen vector, their secretion characteristics, their ability to fold proteins correctly, and their fermentation requirements, as well as the toxicity to the host of the product encoded by the DNA sequences to be expressed, and the ease of purification of the expression products.

Considering these and other factors a person skilled in the art will be able to construct a variety of vector/expression control sequence/host combinations that will express the DNA sequences of this invention on fermentation or in large scale animal culture.

It is further intended that analogs may be prepared from nucleotide sequences of the protein complex/subunit derived within the scope of the present invention. Analogs, such as fragments, may be produced, for example, by pepsin digestion of bacterial material. Other analogs, such as muteins, can be produced by standard site-directed mutagenesis of *dnaX, dnaE, dnaQ, dnaN, holA*, or *holB* coding sequences. Especially useful may be a mutation in *dnaE* that provides the polymerase with the ability to incorporate all four ddNTPs with equal efficiency thereby

producing an even binding pattern in sequencing gels, as discussed above and with reference to Tabor et al., 1995.

As mentioned above, a DNA sequence corresponding to *dnaX, dnaQ, holA, holB, dnaE*, or *dnaN*, or encoding the subunits of the DNA Polymerase III of the invention can be prepared synthetically rather than cloned. The DNA sequence can be designed with the appropriate codons for the amino acid sequence of the subunit(s) of interest. In general, one will select preferred codons for the intended host if the sequence will be used for expression. The complete sequence is assembled from overlapping oligonucleotides prepared by standard methods and assembled into a complete coding sequence (Edge, 1981; Nambair et al., 1984; Jay et al., 1984).

Synthetic DNA sequences allow convenient construction of genes which will express DNA Polymerase III analogs or "muteins". Alternatively, DNA encoding muteins can be made by site-directed mutagenesis of native *dnaX, dnaQ, holA, holB, dnaE* or *dnaN* genes or their corresponding cDNAs, and muteins can be made directly using conventional polypeptide synthesis.

A general method for site-specific incorporation of unnatural amino acids into proteins is described in Noren et al., 1989. This method may be used to create analogs with unnatural amino acids.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

As discussed above, the present invention has as one of its characterizing features, that a Polymerase III-type enzyme as defined hereinabove, has been discovered in a thermophile, that has the structure and function of a chromosomal replicase. This structure and function confers significant benefit when the enzyme is employed in procedures such as PCR where speed and accuracy of DNA reconstruction is crucial.

Chromosomal replicases are composed of several subunits in all organisms (Kornberg and Baker, 1992). In keeping with the need to replicate long chromosomes, replicases are rapid and highly processive multiprotein machines. All cellular replicases examined to date derive their processivity from one subunit that is shaped like a ring and completely encircles DNA (Kuriyan and O'Donnell, 1993; Kelman and O'Donnell, 1994). This "sliding clamp" subunit acts as a mobile tether for the polymerase machine (Stukenberg et al., 1991). The sliding clamp does not

assemble onto the DNA by itself, but requires a complex of several proteins, called a "clamp loader" which couples ATP hydrolysis to the assembly of sliding clamps onto DNA (O'Donnell et al., 1992). Hence, Pol III-type cellular replicases are comprised of three components: a clamp, a clamp loader, and the DNA polymerase.

An overall goal is to identify and isolate all of the genes encoding the replicase subunits from a thermophile for expression and purification in large quantity. Following this, the replication apparatus can be reassembled from individual subunit components for use in kits, PCR, sequencing and diagnostic applications (Onrust et al., 1995).

As a beginning to identify and characterize the replicase of a thermophile, we started by looking for a homologue to the prokaryotic *dnaX* gene which encode subunits (γ and τ) of the replicase. The *dnaX* gene has another homologue, *holB*, which encodes yet another subunit (δ') of the replicase. The amino acid sequence of δ' (encoded by *holA*) and τ/γ subunits (encoded by *dnaX*) are particularly highly conserved in evolution from prokaryotes to eukaryotes (Chen et al., 1992; O'Donnell et al., 1993; Onrust et al., 1993; Carter et al., 1993; Cullman et al., 1995).

One organism chosen for study and exposition herein is the exemplary extreme thermophile *Thermus thermophilus* (*T.th.*). It is understood that other members of the class such as the eubacterium *Thermatoga* are expected to be analogous in both structure and function. Thus, the investigation of *T.th.* proceeded and initially, a *T.th.* homologue of *dnaX* was identified. The gene encodes a full length protein of 529 amino acids. The amino terminal third of the sequence shares over 50% homology to *dnaX* genes as divergent as *E. coli* (gram negative) and *B. subtilis* (gram positive). The *T.th. dnaX* gene contains a DNA sequence that provides a translational frameshift signal for production of two proteins from the same gene. Such frameshifting has been documented only in the case of *E. coli* (Tsuchihashi and Kornberg, 1990; Flower and McHenry, 1990; Blinkowa and Walker, 1990). No frameshifting has been documented to occur in the *dnaX* homologues (RFC subunit genes) of yeast and humans (Eukaryotic kingdom).

The presence of a *dnaX* gene that produces two subunits implies that *T.th.* has a clamp loader (γ) and may be organized by τ into a PolIII*-type replicase like the replicative DNA polymerase of *Escherichia coli*, DNA polymerase III

holoenzyme. The *E. coli* DNA polymerase III holoenzyme contains 10 different subunits, some in copies of two or more for a total composition of 18 polypeptide chains (Kornberg and Baker, 1992; Onrust et al., 1995). The holoenzyme is composed of three major activities: the 3-subunit DNA polymerase core ($\alpha\varepsilon\theta$), the β subunit DNA sliding clamp, and the 5-subunit γ complex clamp loader ($\gamma\delta\delta'\chi\psi$). This 3 component strategy generalizes to eukaryotes which utilize a clamp (PCNA) and a 5-subunit RFC clamp loader (RFC) which provide processivity to DNA polymerase δ (reviewed in Kelman and O'Donnell, 1994).

In *E. coli*, the polymerase and clamp loader components are organized into one PolIII* particle by the τ subunit, that acts as a "glue" protein (Onrust et al., 1995). One dimer of τ holds together two core polymerases in the particle which are utilized for the coordinated and simultaneous replication of both strands of duplex DNA (McHenry, 1982; Maki et al., 1988; Yuzhakov et al., 1996). The "glue" protein τ subunit also binds one clamp loader (called γ complex) thereby acting as a scaffold for a large superstructure assembly called DNA polymerase III*. The gene encoding τ, called *dnaX*, also encodes the γ subunit of DNA polymerase III. The β subunit then associates with Pol III* to form the DNA polymerase III holoenzyme. The γ subunit is approximately 2/3 the length of τ. γ shares the N-terminus of τ, but is truncated by a translational frameshifting mechanism that, after the shift, encounters a stop codon within two amino acids (Tsuchihashi and Kornberg, 1990; Flower and McHenry, 1990; Blinkowa and Walker, 1990). Hence, γ is the N-terminal 453 amino acids of τ, but contains one unique residue at the C-terminus (the penultimate codon encodes a Lys residue which is the same sequence as if the frameshift did not take place). This frameshift is highly efficient and occurs approximately 50% of the time.

The sequence of the γ and τ subunits encoded by the *dnaX* gene are homologous to the clamp loading subunits in all other organisms extending from gram negative bacteria through gram positive bacteria, the Archeae Kingdom and the Eukaryotic Kingdom from yeast to humans (O'Donnell et al., 1993). All of these organisms utilize a three component replicase (DNA polymerase, clamp and clamp loader) and in these cases the 3 components appear to behave as independent units in solution rather than forming a large holoenzyme superstructure. For example, in eukaryotes from yeast to humans, the clamp loader is the five subunit RFC, the clamp

is PCNA, and the polymerases δ and ε are all stimulated by the PCNA clamp assembled onto primed DNA by RFC (reviewed in Kelman and O'Donnell 1994).

The discovery of a *dnaX* gene in *T.th.* provided confidence that thermophilic bacteria would contain a three component Pol III-type enzyme. Hence, we proceeded to identify the *dnaQ* and *dnaN* genes encoding, respectively, the proofreading 3'-5' exonuclease, and the ß DNA sliding clamp subunits of a Pol III-type enzyme. Following this, we purified from extracts of *T.th.* cells, a Pol III-type enzyme. This enzyme preparation had the unique property of extending a single primer around a long 7.2 kb single strand DNA genome of M13mp18 bacteriophage. Such a primer extension assay serves as a tool to detect and identify the Pol III-type of enzyme in cell extracts. The enzyme was confirmed to be a Pol III-type enzyme based on its reactivity with antibody directed against the *E. coli* α subunit (the DNA polymerase subunit) and antibody directed against *E. coli* γ subunit. Proteins corresponding to α, τ, γ, δ and δ' were easily visible and lend themselves to identification of the genes through use of peptide microsequencing followed by primer design for PCR amplification. For example, from this DNA pol III-type preparation, the peptide sequence of the α subunit was obtained, which then allowed the *dnaE* gene encoding the α subunit (DNA polymerase) of the Pol III-type enzyme to be obtain.

These methods should be widely applicable to other thermophilic bacteria. Additional antibody reagents against other Pol III-type enzyme components, such as RFC subunits, DNA polymerase delta, epsilon or beta, and the PCNA clamp from known organisms can be made quite easily as polyclonal or monoclonal antibody preparations using as antigen either naturally purified sequence, recombinant sequence, or synthetic peptide sequence. Examples of known sequences of these Pol III-type enzymes are to be found in: DNA polymerases (Braithwaite and Ito, 1993), RFC clamp loaders (Cullman et al., 1995) and PCNA (Kelman and O'Donnell, 1995).

The remaining genes of *T.th.* Pol III needed for efficient extension of primed templates, *holA* and *holB*, are now identified. The *holA* coding sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 157) encodes the δ subunit (SEQ. ID. No. 158) and the *holB* coding sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 155) encodes the δ' subunit (SEQ. ID. No. 156). The *holA* and *holB* coding sequences and the δ and δ' subunits were identified via BLAST search (Altschul et al., 1997), and subsequently isolated following circular PCR.

These genes will provide the subunit preparations through use of standard recombinant techniques and protein purification protocols. The protein subunits can then be used to reconstitute the enzyme complexes as they exist in the cell. This type of reconstitution of Pol III has been demonstrated using the protein subunits of DNA polymerase III holoenzyme from *E. coli* to assemble the entire particle. See, e.g., U.S. Patent Nos. 5,583,026 and 5,668,004 to O'Donnell; and Onrust et al., 1995. The disclosures of these references are incorporated herein in their entireties.

Another organism chosen for study and exposition herein is the extreme thermophile *Aquifex aeolicus*. Thus, the present invention also relates to various isolated DNA molecules from *Aquifex aeolicus*, in particular the DNA molecules encoding various replication proteins. These include *dnaE*, *dnaX*, *dnaN*, *holA*, *holB*, *ssb* DNA molecules from *A. aeolicus*. These DNA molecules can be inserted into an expression system or used to transform host cells from which isolated proteins can be obtained. The isolated proteins encoded by these DNA molecules are also disclosed.

Unless otherwise indicated below, the *Aquifex aeolicus* sequences were obtained by sequence comparisons using the *Thermus thermophilus* counterparts as query against the genome of *Aquifex aeolicus* (Deckert et al., 1998).

The *A. aeolicus dnaE* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 117 and encodes the α subunit of the of DNA Polymerase III, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 118. The *A.ae.* α subunit has approximately 41% aa identity to the *T.th.* α subunit.

The *A. aeolicus dnaX* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 119 and encodes the τ subunit of the of DNA Polymerase III, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 120. The *A.ae.* τ subunit has approximately 51% aa identity to the *T.th.* τ subunit.

The *A. aeolicus dnaN* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 121 and encodes the β subunit of DNA Polymerase III, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 122. The *A.ae.* β subunit has approximately 27% aa identity to the *T.th.* β subunit.

The *A. aeolicus dnaQ* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 127 and encodes the ε subunit of the of DNA Polymerase

III, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 128. The *A.ae.* ε subunit has approximately 26% aa identity to the *T.th.* ε subunit.

The *A. aeolicus ssb* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 129 and encodes the SSB protein, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 130. The *A.ae* SSB protein has approximately 22% aa identity to the *T.th.* SSB protein.

Further, the coding sequences of *A. aeolicus* genes encoding the helicase (*dnaB*), helicase loader (*dnaC*), and primase (*dnaG*) are also disclosed. The *A. aeolicus dnaB* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 131 and encodes the DnaB protein, which functions as a helicase and has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 132. The *A. aeolicus dnaG* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 133 and encodes the DnaG protein, which functions as a primase and has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 134. The *A. aeolicus dnaC* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 135 and encodes the DnaC protein, which functions as a helicase loader and has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 136.

The *A. aeolicus holA* and *holB* genes were previously unidentified by Deckert et al., 1998. Using *Thermus thermophilus* δ' subunit amino acid sequence and the *Thermatoga maritima* δ subunit amino acid sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 146 which itself was obtained using the *T.th.* δ subunit amino acid sequence of SEQ. ID. No. 158) in separate BLAST searches (Altschul et al., 1997), corresponding polypeptide products in *Aquifex aeolicus* were identified. The *A. aeolicus holA* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 123 and encodes the δ subunit of the of DNA Polymerase III, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 124. The *A.ae.* δ subunit has approximately 21% aa identity to the *T.m.* δ subunit. The *A. aeolicus holB* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 125 and encodes the δ' subunit of the of DNA Polymerase III, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 126. The *A.ae.* δ' subunit has approximately 24% aa identity to the *T.th.* δ' subunit.

This invention also clones at least the coding regions of a set of *A. aeolicus* genes which encode proteins that assemble into an *A. aeolicus* DNA polymerase III replication enzyme. These genes (*dnaE*, *dnaN*, *dnaX*, *dnaQ*, *holA*, *holB*, *ssb*) were cloned into expression vectors, the proteins were expressed in *E. coli*,

and the corresponding protein subunits were purified (alpha, beta, tau, delta, delta prime, SSB). This invention identifies the major protein-protein contacts among these subunits, shows how these proteins can be assembled into higher order multiprotein complexes, and how to form a rapid and processive DNA polymerase III holoenzyme.

In contrast to the *E. coli* and *T. thermophilus dnaX* genes which encode both τ and γ subunits, the *A. aeolicus dnaX* gene produces only the full length τ subunit when expressed in *E. coli*. The *A. aeolicus* τ is intermediate in length between the γ and τ subunits of *E. coli* DNA polymerase III holoenzyme. The *E. coli* τ binds α, the γ subunit does not bind α. Due to the intermediate size of *A. aeolicus* τ, it was not known whether the *A. aeolicus* τ would bind the α subunit. This invention shows that indeed, the *A. aeolicus* τ binds to α, as well as δ and δ', thereby forming an *A. aeolicus* αττδδ' complex. Until the identification of the δ and δ' subunits by the present invention, their existence, let alone their interaction with τ and α, was not even known.

The *A. aeolicus* αττδδ'/β Pol III can be applied in several useful DNA handling techniques. For example, the thermophilic Pol III will be useful in DNA sequencing, especially at high temperature. Also, use of a thermal resistant rapid and processive Pol III is an important improvement to polymerase chain reaction technology. The ability of the *A. aeolicus* Pol III to extend primers for multiple kilobases makes possible the amplification of very long segments of DNA (long chain PCR).

Another organism chosen for study and exposition herein is the extreme thermophile *Thermotoga maritima*. Thus, the present invention also relates to various isolated DNA molecules from *Thermotoga maritima*, in particular the DNA molecules encoding various replication proteins. These include *dnaE*, *dnaX*, *dnaN*, *dnaQ*, *holA*, *holB*, *ssb* DNA molecules from *Thermotoga maritima*. These DNA molecules can be inserted into an expression system or used to transform host cells from which isolated proteins can be obtained. The isolated proteins encoded by these DNA molecules are also disclosed.

Unless otherwise indicated below, the *Thermotoga maritima* sequences were obtained by sequence comparisons using the *Thermus thermophilus* counterparts as query against the genome of *Thermotoga maritima* (Nelson et al., 1999).

The *T. maritima dnaE* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 137 and encodes the α subunit of the of DNA Polymerase III, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 138. The *T.m.* α subunit has approximately 33% aa identity to the *T.th.* α subunit.

The *T. maritima dnaQ* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 139 and encodes the ε subunit of the of DNA Polymerase III, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 140. The *T.m.* ε subunit has approximately 34% aa identity to the *T.th.* ε subunit.

The *T. maritima dnaX* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 141 and encodes the τ subunit of the of DNA Polymerase III, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 142. The *T.m.* τ subunit has approximately 48% aa identity to the *T.th.* τ subunit.

The *T. maritima dnaN* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 143 and encodes the β subunit of DNA Polymerase III, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 144. The *T.m.* β subunit has approximately 28% aa identity to the *T.th.* β subunit.

The *T. maritima ssb* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 149 and encodes the SSB protein, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 150. The *T.m.* SSB protein has approximately 18% aa identity to the *T.th.* SSB protein.

Further, the coding sequences of *T. maritima* genes encoding the helicase (*dnaB*) and primase (*dnaG*) are also disclosed. The *T. maritima dnaB* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 151 and encodes the DnaB protein, which functions as a helicase and has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 152. The *T. maritima dnaG* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 153 and encodes the DnaG protein, which functions as a primase and has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 154.

The *T. maritima holA* and *holB* genes were previously unidentified by Nelson et al., 1999). Using the *Thermus thermophilus* δ and δ' subunit amino acid sequences (SEQ. ID. Nos. 158 and 156, respectively) in separate BLAST searches (Altschul et al., 1997), corresponding polypeptide products in *T. maritima* were identified. The *T. maritima holA* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to

SEQ. ID. No. 145 and encodes the δ subunit of the of DNA Polymerase III, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 146. The *T.m.* δ subunit has approximately 37% aa identity to the *T.th.* δ subunit. The *T.m. holB* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 147 and encodes the δ' subunit which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 148. The *T.m.* δ' subunit has approximately 25% aa identity to the *T.th.* δ' subunit.

Yet another organism chosen for study and exposition herein is the extreme thermophile *Bacillus stearothermophilus*. Thus, the present invention also relates to various isolated DNA molecules from *Bacillus stearothermophilus*, in particular the DNA molecules encoding various replication proteins. These include *dnaE, dnaX, dnaN, dnaQ, holA, holB, ssb* DNA molecules from *Bacillus stearothermophilus*. These DNA molecules can be inserted into an expression system or used to transform host cells from which isolated proteins can be obtained. The isolated proteins encoded by these DNA molecules are also disclosed.

Unless otherwise indicated below, the *Bacillus stearothermophilus* sequences were obtained by searching the database of this organism (at http://www.genome.ou.edu).

The *B. stearothermophilus polC* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 183 and encodes the PolC or α-large subunit of the DNA Polymerase III, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 184. The *B.st.* PolC subunit, like the PolC subunits of other Gram positive organisms, contains both polymerase and 3'-5' exonuclease activity. This subunit, therefore, is essentially a fusion of α and ε.

The *B. stearothermophilus dnaX* gene has a partial nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 181 and encodes the τ subunit of the of DNA Polymerase III, which has a partial amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 182. The *B.st.* τ subunit has approximately 31% aa identity to the *T.th.* τ subunit.

The *B. stearothermophilus dnaN* gene has a partial nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 173 and encodes the β subunit of DNA Polymerase III, which has a partial amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 174. The *B.st.* β subunit has approximately 21% aa identity to the *T.th.* β subunit.

The *B. stearothermophilus ssb* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No.175 and encodes the SSB protein, which has an amino acid

sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 176. The *B.st.* SSB protein has approximately 23% aa identity to the *T.th.* SSB protein.

The *B. stearothermophilus holA* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 177 and encodes the δ subunit of DNA Polymerase III, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 178. The *B.st.* δ subunit has approximately 26% aa identity to the *T.th.* δ subunit.

The *B. stearothermophilus holB* gene has a nucleotide coding sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 179 and encodes the δ' subunit of DNA Polymerase III, which has an amino acid sequence according to SEQ. ID. No. 180. The *B.st.* δ' subunit has approximately 25% aa identity to the *T.th.* δ' subunit.

By conducting BLAST searches of unidentified genomic DNA from other thermophilic eubacteria, it is possible to identify coding regions which encode various functional subunits of other Pol III replicative machinery.

Although it is generally appreciated that proteins isolated from a thermophile should retain activity at high temperature, there is no guarantee that they will retain temperature resistance when isolated in pure form. This invention shows that the *A. aeolicus* Pol III, like the *T. thermophilus* Pol III, is resistant to high temperature. It is expected that the *Th. maritima and B. stearothermophilus* Pol III enzymes will similalry be resistant to high temperature.

The following experiments illustrate the identification and characterization of the enzymes and constructs of the present invention. Accordingly, in Examples 1-8 below, the identification and expression of the γ and τ is presented, as the first step in the elucidation of the *Thermus thermophilus* Polymerase III reflective of the present invention. Examples 9-12 which follow set forth the protocol for the purification of the remainder of the sub-units of the enzyme that represent substantial entirety of the functional replicative machinery of the enzyme. Examples 18-30 demonstrate the preparation of isolated *A. aeolicus* sequences Pol III subunits and their thermostable use.

EXAMPLE 1

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES

Materials

DNA modification enzymes were from New England Biolabs. Labelled nucleotides were from Amersham, and unlabeled nucleotides were from New England Biolabs The Alter-1 vector was from Promega. pET plasmids and *E. coli* strains, BL21(DE3) and BL21(DE3)pLysS were from Novagen. Oligonucleotides were from Operon. Buffer A is 20mM Tris-HC1 (pH 7.5), 0.1mM EDTA, 5mMDTT, and 10% glycerol.

Genomic DNA

Thermus thermophilus (strain HB8) was obtained from the American Type Tissue Collection. Genomic DNA was prepared from cells grown in 0.1 l of Thermus medium N697 (ATCC: 4 g yeast extract, 8.0 g polypeptone (BBL 11910), 2.0 g NaCl, 30.0 g agar, 1.0 L distilled water) at 75°C overnight. Cells were collected by centrifugation at 4°C and the cell pellet was resuspended in 25 ml of 100 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.0), 0.05 M EDTA, 2 mg/ml lysozyme and incubated at room temperature for 10 min. Then 25 ml 0.10 M EDTA (pH 8.0), 6% SDS was added and mixed followed by 60 ml of phenol. The mixture was shaken for 40 min. followed by centrifugation at 10,000 X G for 10 min. at room temperature. The upper phase (50 ml) was removed and mixed with 50 ml of phenol:chloroform (50:50 v/v) for 30 min. followed by centrifugation for 10 min. at room temperature. The upper phase was decanted and the DNA was precipitated upon addition of 1/10th volume 3 M sodium acetate (pH 6.5) and 1 volume ethanol. The precipitate was collected by centrifugation and washed twice with 2 ml of 80% ethanol, dried and resuspended in 1 ml T.E. buffer (10mM Tris Hcl (pH 7.5), 1mM EDTA).

Cloning of *dnaX*

DNA oligonucleotides for amplification of *T.th.* genomic DNA were as follows. The upstream 32mer (5'-CGCAAGCTTCACGCSTACCTSTTCTCCGGSAC -3', S indicating a mixture of G and C) (SEQ. ID. No. 6) consists of a Hind III site

within the first 9 nucleotides (underlined) followed by codons (SEQ. ID. No. 29) encoding the following amino acid sequence (HAYLFSGT) (SEQ. ID. No. 7). The downstream 34 mer (5'-CGCGAATTCGTGCTCSGGSGGCTCCTCSAGSGTC-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 8) consists of an EcoRI site (underlined) followed by codons (SEQ. ID. No. 30) encoding the sequence KTLEEPPEH (SEQ. ID. No. 9) on the complementary strand. The amplification reactions contained 10 ng *T.th.* genomic DNA, 0.5 mM of each primer, in a volume of 100 µl of Vent polymerase reaction mixture according to the manufacturers instructions (10 µl ThermoPol Buffer, 0.5 mM each dNTP and 0.5 mM $MgSO_4$). Amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme: 5 cycles of: 30 sec. at 95.5°C, 30 sec. at 40°C, 2 min. at 72°C; 5 cycles of: 30 sec. at 95.5°C, 30 sec. at 45°C, and 2 min. at 72°C; and 30 cycles of: 30 sec. at 95.5°C, 30 sec. at 50°C, and 30 sec. at 72°C. Products were visualized in a 1.5 % native agarose gel.

Genomic DNA was digested with either XhoI, XbaI, StuI, PstI, NcoI, MluI, KpnI, HindIII, EcoRI, EagI, BglI, or BamHI, followed by Southern analysis in a native agarose gel (Maniatis et al., 1982). Approximately 0.5 µg of digest was analyzed in each lane of a 0.8 % native agarose gel followed by transfer to an MSI filter (Micron Separations Inc.). The transfer included the following steps:

1. The agarose gel was soaked in 500 ml of 1% HCl with gentle shaking for 10 min.
2. Then the gel was soaked in 500 ml of 0.5 M NaOH + 1.5 M NaCl for 40 min.
3. After that the gel was soaked in 500 ml of 1M ammonium acetate for 1 h.
4. The DNA was transferred to the MSI filter with the use of blotting paper for 4 h.
5. The filter was kept at 80°C for 15 min. in the oven.
6. The pre-hybridization step was run in 10 ml of Hybridization solution (1% crystalline BSA (fraction V) (Sigma), 1 mM EDTA, 0.5 M NaHPO4 (pH 7.2), 7% SDS) at 65°C for 30 min.
7. The probe, radiolabelled by the random priming method (see below), was added to the pre-hybridization solution and kept at 65°C for 12 h.
8. The filter was washed with low stringency with 200 ml of the wash buffer (0.5% BSA, fractionV), 1mM Na2EDTA, 40 mM NaHPO4 (pH 7.2), 5% SDS with gentle shaking for 20 min. This step was repeated 5 times, followed by exposure to X-ray film (XAR-5, Kodak).

As a probe, the PCR product was radiolabelled by random as follows.

1. 14 ml of the mixture containing 0.2 μg of PCR product DNA, 1 μg of the pd(N6) (Promega) and 2.5 ml of the 10X Klenow reaction buffer (100 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 50 mM $MgCl_2$, 75 mM dithiothreitol) were boiled for 10 min. and then kept at 4°C.

2. The reaction volume was increased up to 25 μl, containing in addition 33 μM of each dNTP, except dATP, 10 μCi [α-^{32}P] dATP (800 Ci/mM), and 2 units of Klenow enzyme. The reaction mixture was incubated 1.5 h.

3. 2 mg of sonicated herring sperm DNA (GibcoBRL) was added to the reaction and the volume was increased to 2 ml using hybridization solution. The sample was then boiled for 10 min.

A genomic library of XbaI digested DNA was prepared upon treating 1 μg genomic *T.th.* DNA with 10 units of XbaI in 100 μl of NEBuffer N2 (50 mM NaCl, 10 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.9), 10 mM MgCl2, 1 mM DTT) for 2 h at 37°C. The digested DNA was purified by phenol chloroform extraction and ethanol precipitation. The Alter-1 vector (0.5 μg)(Promega) was digested with 1 unit of XbaI in NEBuffer N2 and then purified by phenol/chloroform extraction and ethanol precipitation. One microgram of genomic digest was incubated with 0.05 μg of digested Alter-1 and 20 U of T4 ligase in 30 μl of ligase buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.8), 10 mM MgCl2, 10 mM DTT and 1 mM ATP) at 15°C for 12 h. The ligation reaction was transformed into the DH5α strain of *E. coli* and transformants were plated on LB plates containing ampicillin and screened for the *dnaX* insert using the radiolabelled PCR probe as follows:

1. The colonies tested were lifted onto MSI filters, approximately 100 colonies to each filter.

2. The filters, removed from the LB/Tc plates, were placed side up on a sheet of Whatman 3 MM paper soaked with 0.5 M NaOH for 5 min.

3. The filters were transferred to a sheet of paper soaked with 1 M Tris-HCl (pH 7.5) for 5 min.

4. The filters were placed on a sheet of paper soaked in 0.5 M Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 1.25 M NaCl for 5 min.

5. After drying by air, the filters were heated in the oven 80° C for 15 min. and then were analyzed by Southern hybridization.

Plasmid DNA was prepared from 20 positive colonies; of these 6 contained the expected 4 kb insert when digested with XbaI. Sequencing of the insert was

performed by the Sanger method using the Vent polymerase sequencing kit according to the manufacturers instructions (New England Biolabs).

Identification of the *dnaX* gene

The *dnaX* genes of the gram negative *E. coli* and the gram positive *B. subtilis* share more than 50% identity in amino acid sequence within the N-terminal 180 residues containing the ATP-binding domain (Fig. 2). Two highly conserved regions (shown in bold in Fig. 2) were used to design oligonucleotide primers for application of the polymerase chain reaction to *T.th.* genomic DNA. The expected PCR product, including the restriction sites (i.e. before cutting) is 345 nucleotides. Use of these primers with genomic *T.th.* DNA resulted in a product of the expected size. The PCR product was then radiolabelled and used to probe genomic DNA in a Southern analysis (Fig. 3). Genomic DNA was digested with several different restriction endonucleases, electrophoresed in a native agarose gel and then probed with the PCR fragment. The Southern analysis showed an XbaI fragment of approximately 4 kb, more than sufficient length to encode the *dnaX* gene. Other restriction nucleases produced fragments that were significantly longer, or produced two or more fragments indicating presence of a site within the coding sequence of *dnaX*.

To obtain full length *dnaX*, genomic DNA was digested with XbaI and ligated into XbaI digested Alter-1 vector. Ligated DNA was transformed into DH5 alpha cells, and colonies were screened with the labeled PCR probe. Plasmid DNA was prepared from 20 positive colonies and analyzed for the appropriate sized insert using XbaI. Six of the twenty clones contained the expected 4 kb XbaI fragment as an insert, the sequence of which is shown in Figs. 4A and 4B.

The frameshift site

The *dnaX* gene of *E. coli* produces two proteins, the γ and τ subunits, by a -1 frameshift (Tsuchihashi and Kornberg, 1990; Flower and McHenry, 1990; Blinkowa and Walker, 1990). The full length product yields τ, and the frameshift results in addition of one amino acid before encountering a stop codon to produce γ. The -1 frameshift site in the *E. coli dnaX* gene contains the sequence, A AAA AAG, which follows the X XXY YYZ rule found in retroviral genes (Jacks et al., 1988).

This "slippery sequence" preserves the initial two residues of the tRNAs in the aminoacyl and peptidyl sites both before and after the frameshift. Mutagenesis of the *E. coli dnaX* frameshifting site has shown that the first three residues can be nucleotides other than A, but that A's in the second set of three nucleotides is important to frameshifting (Tsuchihashi and Brown, 1992).

Immediately downstream of the stop codon is a potential stem-loop structure which enhances frameshifting, presumably by causing the ribosome to pause. Further, the AAG codon lacks a cognate tRNA in *E. coli* and thus the G residue may facilitate the pause, and has been shown to aid the vigorous frameshifting observed in the *E. coli dnaX* gene (Tsuchihashi and Brown, 1992). A fourth component of frameshifting in the *E. coli dnaX* gene is presence of an upstream Shine-Dalgarno sequence which is thought to pair with the 16S rRNA to increase the frequency of frameshifting still further (Larsen et al., 1994).

Examination of the *T.th. dnaX* sequence reveals a single site that fulfills the X XXY YYZ rule in which positions 4-7 are A residues. The site is unique from that in *E. coli* as all seven residues are A, and the heptanucleotide sequence is flanked by another A residue on each side (i.e. A9). Surprisingly, the stop codon immediately downstream of this site is in the -2 frame, although there is a stop codon in the -1 frame 28 nucleotides downstream of the -2 stop codon. Indeed, a -2 frameshift would fulfill the requirement that the first two nucleotides of each codon in the peptidyl and aminoacyl sites be conserved during either a -1 or a -2 frameshift. As with the case of *E. coli dnaX*, there are secondary structure step loop structures immediately downstream. Finally, there is a Shine-Dalgarno sequence immediately adjacent to the frameshift site, as well as another Shine-Dalgarno sequence 22 nucleotides upstream of the frameshift site.

Assuming the first stop codon is utilized (i.e. -2 frameshift), the predicted size of the γ subunit in *T.th.* is 454 amino acids for a mass of 49.8 kDa, over 2 kDa larger than the 431 residue γ subunit (47.5 kDa) of *E. coli*. This would result in 2 residues after the -2 frameshift (i.e. after the GluLysLys, the residues LysAla would be added) to be compared to the result of the -1 frameshift in *E. coli* which also results in 2 residues (LysGlu). In the event that a -1 frameshift were utilized in the *T.th. dnaX* gene, then an additional 12 residues would be added following the frameshift for a molecular mass of 50.8 kDa (i.e. after the GluLysLys, the residues

LysProAspProLysAlaProProGlyProThrSer would be added at aa 453-464 of SEQ. ID. No. 4). As explained later, this nucleotide sequence was found to promote both -1 and -2 frameshifting in *E. coli* (Fig. 8). But first, we examined *T.th.* cells by Western analysis for the presence of two subunits homologous to *E. coli* γ and τ.

EXAMPLE 2

Frameshifting analysis of the *T.th. dnaX* gene

Frameshifting was analyzed by inserting the frameshift site into lacZ in the three different reading frames, followed by plating on *X-gal* and scoring for blue or white colony formation (Weiss et al., 1987). The frameshifting region within *T.th dnaX* was subcloned into the EcoRI/BamHI sites of pUC19. These sites are within the polylinker inside of the ß-galactosidase gene. Three constructs were produced such that the insert was either in frame with the downstream coding sequence of ß-galactosidase, or were out of frame (either -1 or -2). An additional three constructs were designed by mutating the frameshift sequence and then placing this insert into the three reading frames of the ß-galactosidase gene. These six plasmids were constructed as described below.

The upstream primer for the shifty sequences was 5'-gcg cgg atc cgg agg gag aaa aaa aaa gcc tca gcc ca-3' (SEQ. ID. No. 10). The BamHI site for cloning into pUC is underlined. Also, the stop codon, tga, has been mutated to tca (also underlined). The upstream primer for the mutant shifty sequence was: 5'-gcg cgg atc cgg agg gag aga aga aaa gcc tca gcc ca-3' (SEQ. ID. No. 11). The mutant sequence contains two substitutions of a G for an A residue in the polyA stretch (underlined). Three downstream primers were utilized with each upstream primer to create two sets of three inserts in the 0 frame, -1 frame and -2 frame. The sequence of these primers, and the length of insert (after cutting with EcoRI and BanHI and inserting into pUC19) are as follows: 5'-gaa tta aat tcg cgc ttc ggg agg tgg g-3' (0 frameshift, total 58 nucleotide insert) (SEQ. ID. No. 12); 5'-gcg cga att cgc gct tcg gga ggt ggg-3' (-1 frame, 54mer insert) (SEQ. ID. No. 13); and 5'-gcg cga att cgg gcg ctt cag gag gtg gg-3' (-2 frame, 56mer insert) (SEQ. ID. No. 14). The downstream primers have an EcoRI site (underlined); the EcoRI site of the 0 frame insert was blunt ended to produce the greater length insert (converting the EcoRI site to an aattaatt sequence). Also, the tcg sequence, which produces the tga stop codon (underlined) was mutated

to tca in the -2 downstream primer so that readthrough would be allowed after the frameshift occurred.

In summary, a region surrounding the frameshift site and ending at least 5 nucleotides past the -1 frameshift stop codon was inserted into the ß-galactosidase gene of pUC19 in the three different reading frames (stop codons were mutated to prevent stoppage following a frameshift). These three plasmids were introduced into *E. coli* and plated with *X-gal*. The results, in Fig. 8, show that blue colonies were observed after 24 h incubation with all three plasmids and therefore both -1 and -2 frameshifting had occurred.

To further these results, two γ residues were introduced into the polyA tract which should disrupt the ability of this sequence to direct frameshifts. The mutated slippery sequence was inserted into pUC19 followed by transformation into *E. coli* and plating on X-gal. The results showed that both -1 and -2 frameshifting was prevented, further supporting the fact that frameshifting requires the polyA tract as expected (Fig. 8).

EXAMPLE 3

Expression vector for *T.th.* γ and τ

The *dnaX* gene was cloned into the pET16 expression vector in the steps shown in Fig. 9. First, the bulk of the gene was cloned into pET16 by removing the PmlI/XbaI fragment from pAlterdnaX, and placing it into SmaI/XbaI digested Puc19 to yield Puc19dnaXCterm. The N-terminal sequence of the *dnaX* gene was then reconstructed to position an NdeI site at the N-terminus. This was performed by amplifying the 5' region encoding the N-terminal section of γ/τ using an upstream primer containing an NdeI site that hybridizes to the *dnaX* gene at the initiating gtg codon (i.e. to encode Met where the Met is created by the PCR primer, and the Val is the initiating gtg start codon of *dnaX*). The primer sequence for this 5' end was: 5'-gtggtgcatatg gtg agc gcc ctc tac cgc c-3' (SEQ. ID. No. 15) (where the NdeI site is underlined, and the coding sequence of *dnaX* follows). The downstream primer hybridizes past the PmlI site at nucleotide positions 987 - 1004 downstream of the initiating gtg (primer sequence: 5'-gtggtggtcgac cca gga ggg cca cct cca g-3' (SEQ. ID. No. 16) where the initial 12 nucleotides contain a SalGI restriction site, followed

by the sequence from the region downstream the stop codon). The 1.1 kb nucleotide PCR product was digested with PmlI/NdeI and the PmlI/NdeI fragment was ligated into NdeI/PmlI digested Puc19dnaXCterm to form Puc19dnaX. The Puc19dnaX plasmid was then digested with NdeI and SalI and the 1.9 kb fragment containing the *dnaX* gene was purified using the Sephaglas BandPrep Kit (Pharmacia-LKB). pET16b was digested with NdeI and XhoI. Then the full length *dnaX* gene was ligated into the digested pET16b to form pET*dnaX*.

EXAMPLE 4

Expression of *T.th.* γ and τ

As discussed in the previous example, the *dnaX* gene was engineered into the T7 based IPTG inducible pET16 vector such that the initiation codon was placed precisely following the Met residue N-terminal leader sequence (Fig. 9). This should produce a protein containing the entire sequence of γ and τ, along with a 21 residue leader containing 10 contiguous His residues (tagged-τ = 60.6 kDa; tagged-γ = 52.4 kDa for -2 frameshift). The pET*dnaX* plasmid was introduced into BL21(DE3)pLysS cells harboring the gene encoding T7 RNA polymerase under control of the lac repressor. Log phase cells were induced with IPTG and analyzed before and after induction in an SDS polyacrylamide gel (Fig. 10, lanes 1 and 2). The result shows that upon induction, two new proteins are expressed with the approximate sizes expected of the *T.th.* γ and τ subunits (larger than *E. coli* γ, and smaller than *E. coli* τ). The two proteins are produced in nearly equal amounts, similar to the case of the *E. coli* γ and τ subunits. Western analysis using antibodies against the *E. coli* γ and τ subunits cross-reacted with the induced proteins further supporting their identity as *T.th.* γ and τ (data not shown, but repeated with the pure subunits shown in Fig. 10, lane 6).

EXAMPLE 5

Purification of *T.th.* γ and τ

The His-tagged *T.th.* γ and τ proteins were purified from 6 L of induced *E. coli* cells containing the pET*dnaX* plasmid. Cells were lysed, clarified

from cell debris by centrifugation and the supernatant was applied to a HiTrap chelate affinity column. Elution of the chelate affinity column yielded approximately 35 mg of protein in which the two predominant bands migrated in a region consistent with the molecular weight predicted from the *dnaX* gene (Fig. 10, lane 3), and produced a positive signal by Western analysis using polyclonal antibody directed against the *E. coli* γ and τ subunits (lane 4). The γ and τ subunits are present in nearly equal amounts consistent with the nearly equal expression of these proteins in *E. coli* cells harboring the pET*dnaX* plasmid.

The γ and τ subunits were further purified by gel filtration on a Superose 12 column (Fig. 10, lane 4; Fig. 11). Recovery of *T.th.* γ and τ subunits through gel filtration was 81%. The *E. coli* γ and τ subunits, when separated from one another, elute during gel filtration as tetramers. A mixture of *E. coli* γ/τ results in a mixed tetramer of γ2τ2 along with γ4 and τ4 tetramers (Onrust et al., 1995). The mixture of *T.th.* γ/τ elutes ahead of the 150 kDa marker, and thus is consistent with the expected mass of a γ2τ2 tetramer (225 kDa) and γ4 and τ4 tetramers.

As described earlier, the *dnaX* frameshifting sequence could produce either a -1 or -2 framehift to yield a His-tagged γ subunit of mass either 53.3 kDa or 52.4 kDa, respectively. The difference in these two possible products is too close to determine from migration in SDS gels. It also remains possible that two γ products are present and do not resolve under the conditions used. The exact protocol for this purification is described below.

Six liters of BL21(DE3)pLysSpET*dnaX* cells were grown in LB media containing 50 μg/ml ampicillin and 25 μg/ml chloramphenicol at 37°C to an O.D. of 0.8 and then IPTG was added to a concentration of 2 mM. After a further 2 h at 37°C, cells were harvested by centrifugation and stored at -70°C. The following steps were performed at 4°C. Cells (15 g wet weight) were thawed and resuspended in 45 ml 1X binding buffer (5 mM imidizole, 0.5 M NaCl, 20 mM Tris HCl (final pH 7.5)) using a dounce homogenizer to complete cell lysis and 450 ml of 5% polyamine P (Sigma) was added. Cell debris was removed by centrifugation at 18,000 rpm for 30 min. in a Sorvall SS24 rotor at 4°C. The supernatant (Fraction I, 40 ml, 376 mg protein) was applied to a 5 ml HiTrap Chelating Separose column (Pharmacia-LKB). The column was washed with 25 ml of binding buffer, then with 30 ml of binding buffer containing 60 mM imidizole, and then eluted with 30 ml of 0.5 M imidizole, 0.5 M

NaCl, 20 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5). Fractions of 1 ml were collected and analyzed on an 8% Coomassie Blue stained SDS polyacrylamide gel. Fractions containing subunits migrating at the *T.th* γ and τ positions, and exhibiting cross reactivity with antibody to *E. coli* γ and τ in a Western analysis, were pooled and dialyzed against buffer A (20 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 0.1 mM EDTA, 5 mM DTT and 10% glycerol) containing 0.5 M NaCl (Fraction II, 36 mg in 7 ml). Fraction II was diluted 2-fold with buffer A and passed through a 2 ml ATP agarose column equilibrated in buffer A containing 0.2 M NaCl to remove any *E. coli* γ complex contaminant. Then 0.18 mg (300 ml) Fraction II was gel filtered on a 24 ml Superose 12 column (Pharmacia-LKB) in buffer A containing 0.5 M NaCl. After the first 216 drops, fractions of 200 µl were collected (Fraction III) and analyzed by Western analysis (by procedures similar to those described in Example 6), by ATPase assays and by Coomassie Blue staining of an 8% Coomassie Blue stained SDS polyacrylamide gel. The Coomassie stained gels and Western analysis of recombinant *T.th.* gamma and tau for these purification steps are summarized in Fig. 10.

EXAMPLE 6

Western Analysis of *T.th.* cells for presence of γ and τ subunits

Polyclonal antibody to *E. coli* γ/τ - *E. coli* γ subunit was prepared as described (Studwell-Vaughan and O'Donnell, 1991). Pure γ subunit (100 µg) was brought up in Freund's adjuvant and injected subcutaneously into a New Zealand Rabbit (Poccono Rabbit Farms). After two weeks, a booster consisting of 50 µg γ in Freund's adjuvant was administered, followed after two weeks by a third injection (50 µg).

The homology between the amino terminal regions of *T.th.* and *E. coli* γ/τ subunits suggested that there may be some epitopes in common between them. Hence, polyclonal antibody directed against the *E. coli* γ/τ subunits was raised in rabbits for use in probing *T.th.* cells by Western analysis. Fig. 7 shows the results of a Western analysis of whole *T.th.* cells lysed in SDS. The results show that in *T.th.* cells, the antibody is rather specific for two high molecular proteins which migrate in the vicinity of the molecular masses of *E. coli* γ and τ subunits.

Procedure for Western Analysis

Samples were analyzed in duplicate 10 % SDS polyacrylamide gels by the Western method (Towbin et al. 1979). One gel was Coomassie stained to evaluate the pattern of proteins present, and the other gel was then electroblotted onto a nitrocellulose membrane (Schleicher and Schuell). For molecular size markers, the kaliedoscope molecular weight markers (Bio-Rad) were used to verify by visualization that transfer of proteins onto the blotted membrane had occurred. The gel used in electroblotting was also stained after electroblotting to confirm that efficient transfer of protein had occured. Membranes were blocked using 5% non-fat milk, washed with 0.05% Tween in TBS (TBS-T) and then incubated for over 1 h with a 1/5000 dilution of rabbit polyclonal antibody directed against *E. coli* γ and τ in 1 % gelatin in TBS-T at room temperature. Membranes were washed using TBS-T buffer and then antibody was detected on X-ray film (Kodak) by using the ECL kit from (Amersham) and the manufactures reccommended procedures.

Samples included: 1) a mixture of *E. coli* γ (15 ng) and τ (15 ng) subunits; 2) *T.th.* whole cells (100 µl) suspended in cracking buffer; and 3) purified *T.th.* γ and τ fraction II (0.6 µg as a mixture).

EXAMPLE 7

Characterization of the ATPase Activity of γ/τ

The *E. coli* τ subunit is a DNA dependent ATPase (Lee and Walker, 1987; Tsuchihashi and Kornberg, 1989). The γ subunit binds ATP but does not hydrolyze it even in the presence of DNA unless other subunits of the DNA polymerase III holoenzyme are also present (Onrust et al., 1991). Next we examined the *T.th.* γ/τ subunits for DNA dependent ATPase activity. The γ/τ preparation was, in fact, a DNA stimulated ATPase (Fig. 11, top panel). The specific activity of the *T.th.* γ/τ was 11.5 mol ATP hydrolyzed/mol γ/τ (as monomer and assuming an equal mixture of the two). Furthermore, analysis of the gel filtration column fractions shows that the ATPase activity coelutes with the *T.th.* γ/τ subunits, supporting evidence that the weak ATPase activity is intrinsic to the γ/τ subunits (Fig. 11). The specific activity of the γ/τ preparation before gel filtration was the same as after gel filtration (within 10%), further indicating that the DNA stimulated ATPase is an

inherent activity of the γ/τ subunits. Presumably, only the τ subunit contains ATPase activity, as in the case of *E. coli*. Assuming only *T.th.* τ contains ATPase activity, its specific activity is twice the observed rate (after factoring out the weight of γ). This rate is still only one-fifth that of *E. coli* τ.

The *T.th.* γ/τ ATPase activity is lower at 37°C than at 65°C (middle panel), consistent with the expected behavior of protein activity from a thermophilic source. However, there is no apparent increase in activity in proceeding from 50°C to 65°C (the rapid breakdown of ATP above 65°C precluded measurement of ATPase activity at temperatures above 65°C). In contrast, the *E. coli* τ subunit lost most of its ATPase activity upon elevating the temperature to 50°C (middle panel). These reactions contain no stabilizers such as a nonionic detergent or gelatin, nor did they include substrates such as ATP, DNA or magnesium.

Last, the relative stability of *T.th.* γ/τ and *E. coli* γ/τ to addition of NaCl (Fig. 12, bottom panel) was examined. Whereas the *E. coli* τ subunit rapidly lost activity at even 0.2 M NaCl, the *T.th.* γ/τ retained full activity in 1.0 M NaCl and was still 80 % active in 1.5 M NaCl. The detailed procedure for the ATPase activity assay is described below.

ATPase assays

ATPase assays were performed in 20 μl of 20 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 8 mM $MgCl_2$ containing 0.72 μg of M13mp18 ssDNA (where indicated), 100 mM [γ-^{32}P]-ATP (specific activity of 2000-4000 cpm/pmol), and the indicated protein. Some reactions contained additional NaCl where indicated. Reactions were incubated at the temperatures indicated in the figure legends for 30 min. and then were quenched with an equal volume of 25 mM EDTA (final). The aliquots were analyzed by spotting them (1 μl each) onto thin layer chromatography (TLC) sheets coated with Cel-300 polyethyleneimine (Brinkmann Instruments Co.). TLC sheets were developed in 0.5 M lithium chloride, 1 M formic acid. An autoradiogram of the TLC chromatogram was used to visualize Pi at the solvent front and ATP near the origin which were then cut from the TLC sheet and quantitated by liquid scintillation. The extent of ATP hydrolyzed was used to calculate the mol of Pi released per mol of protein per min. One mol of *E. coli* τ was calculated assuming a mass of 71 kDa per monomer. The *T.th.* γ and τ preparation was treated as an equal mixture and thus one

mole of protein as monomer was the average of the predicted masses of the γ and τ subunits (54 kDa).

EXAMPLE 8

Homolog of *T.th.* γ/τ to *dnaX* gene products of other organism

The XbaI insert encoded an open reading frame, starting with a GTG codon, of 529 amino acids in length (58.0 kDa), closer to the predicted length of the *B. subtilis* τ subunit (563 amino acids, 62.7 kDa mass)(Alonso et al., 1990) than the *E. coli* τ subunit (71.1 kDa)(Yin et al., 1986). The *dnaX* gene encoding the γ/τ subunits of *E. coli* DNA polymerase III holoenzyme is homologous to the *holB* gene encoding the δ' subunit of the γ complex clamp loader, and this homology extends to all 5 subunits of the eukaryotic RFC clamp loader as well as the bacteriophage gene protein 44 of the gp44/62 clamp loading complex (O'Donnell et al., 1993). These gene products show greatest homology over the N-terminal 166 amino acid residues (of *E. coli dnaX*); the C-terminal regions are more divergent. Fig. 4 shows an alignment of the amino acid sequence of the N-terminal regions of the *T.th. dnaX* gene product to those of several other bacteria. The consensus GXXGXGKT (SEQ. ID. No. 17) motif for nucleotide binding is conserved in all these protein products. Further, the *E. coli* δ' crystal structure reveals one atom of zinc coordinated to four Cys residues (Guenther, 1996). These four Cys residues are conserved in the *E. coli dnaX* gene, and the γ and τ subunits encoded by *E. coli dnaX* bind one atom of zinc. These Cys residues are also conserved in *T.th. dnaX* (shown in Fig. 4). Overall, the level of amino acid identity relative to *E. coli dnaX* in the N-terminal 165 residues of *T.th. dnaX* is 53 %. The *T.th. dnaX* gene is just as homologous to the *B. subtilis dnaX* (53 % identity) gene relative to *E. coli dnaX*. After this region of homology, the C-terminal region of *T.th. dnaX* shares 26% and 20% identity to *E. coli* and *B. subtilis dnaX*, respectively. A proline rich region, downstream of the conserved region, is also present in *T.th. dnaX* (residues 346-375), but not in the *B. subtilis dnaX* (see Figs. 3A and 3B). The overall identity between *E. coli dnaX* and *T.th. dnaX* over the entire gene is 34%. Identity of *T.th. dnaX* to *B. subtilis dnaX* over the entire gene is 28%.

Comparison of *dnaX* genes from *T.th.* and *E. coli*

The above identifies a homologue of the *dnaX* gene of *E. coli* in *Thermus thermophilus*. Like the *E. coli* gene, *T.th. dnaX* encodes two related proteins through use of a highly efficient translational frameshift. The *T.th.* γ/τ subunits are tetramers, or mixed tetramers, similar to the γ and τ subunits of *E. coli*. Further, the γ/τ subunit is a DNA stimulated ATPase like its *E. coli* counterpart. As expected for proteins from a thermophile, the *T.th.* γ/τ ATPase activity is thermostabile and resistant to added salt.

In *E. coli*, γ is a component of the clamp loader, and the τ subunit serves the function of holding the clamp loading apparatus together with two DNA polymerases for coordinated replication of duplex DNA. The presence of γ in *T.th.* suggests it has a clamp loading apparatus and thus a clamp as well. The presence of the τ subunit of *T.th.* implies that *T.th.* contains a replicative polymerase with a structure similar to that of *E. coli* DNA polymerase III holoenzyme.

A significant difference between *E. coli* and *T.th. dnaX* genes is in the translational frameshift sequence. In *E. coli*, the heptamer frameshift site contains six A residues followed by a G residue in the context A AAA AAG. This sequence satisfies the X XXY YYZ rule for -1 frameshifting. The frameshift is made more efficient by the absence of the AAG tRNA for Lys which presumably leads to stalling of the ribosome at the frameshift site and increases the efficiency of frameshifting (Tsuchihashi and Brown, 1992). Two additional aids to frameshifting include a downstream hairpin and an upstream Shine-Dalgarno sequence (Tsuchihashi and Kornberg, 1990; Larsen et al., 1994). The -1 frameshift leads to incorporation of one unique residue at the C-terminus of *E. coli* γ before encounter with a stop codon.

In *T.th.*, the *dnaX* frameshifting heptamer is A AAA AAA, and it is flanked by two other A residues, one on each side. There is also a downstream region of secondary structure. The nearest downstream stop codon is positioned such that gamma would contain only one unique amino acid, as in *E. coli*. However, the *T.th.* stop codon is in the -2 reading frame thus requires a -2 frameshift. No precedent exists in nature for -2 frameshifting, although -2 frameshifting has been shown to occur in test cases (Weiss et al., 1987). *In vivo* analysis of the *T.th.* frameshift sequence shows that this natural sequence promotes both -1 and -2 frameshifting in *E. coli*. Whereas the -2 frameshift results in only one unique C-terminal residue, a -1

frameshift would result in an extension of 12 C-terminal residues. At present, the results do not discriminate which path occurs in *T.th.*, a -1 or -2 frameshift, or a combination of the two.

There are two Shine-Dalgarno sequences just upstream of the frameshift site in *T.th. dnaX*. In two cases of frameshifting in *E. coli*, an upstream Shine-Dalgarno sequence has been shown to stimulate frameshifting (reviewed in Weiss et al., 1897). In release factor 2 (RF2), the Shine-Dalgarno is 3 nucleotides upstream of the shift site, and it stimulates a +1 frameshift event. In the case of *E. coli dnaX*, a Shine-Dalgarno sequence 10 nucleotides upstream of the shift sequence stimulates the -1 frameshift. One of the *T.th. dnaX* Shine-Dalgarno sequences is immediately adjacent to the frameshift sequence with no extra space, the other is 22 residues upstream of the frameshift site. Which of these Shine-Dalgarno sequences plays a role in *T.th. dnaX* frameshifting, if any, will require future study.

In *E. coli*, efficient separation of the two polypeptides, γ and τ, is achieved by mutation of the frameshift site such that only one polypeptide is produced from the gene (Tsuchihashi and Kornberg, 1990). Substitution of G-to-A in two positions of the heptamer of *T.th. dnaX* eliminates frameshifting and thus should be a source to obtain τ subunit free of γ. To produce pure γ subunit free of τ, the frameshifting site and sequence immediately downstream of it can be substituted for an in-frame sequence with a stop codon.

Examination of the *B. subtilis dnaX* gene shows no frameshift sequence that satisfies the X XXY YYZ rule. Hence, it would appear that *dnaX* does not make two proteins in this gram positive organism.

Rapid thermal motions associated with high temperature may make coordination of complicated processes more difficult. It seems possible that organizing the components of the replication apparatus may become yet more important at higher temperature. Hence, production of a τ subunit that could be used to crosslink two polymerases and a clamp loader into one organized particle may be most useful at elevated temperature.

As stated above, the following examples describe the continued isolation and purification of the substantial entirety of the Polymerase III from the extreme thermophile *Thermus thermophilus*. It is to be understood that the following exposition is reflective of the protocol and characteristics, both morphological and

functional, of the Polymerase III-type enzymes that are the focus of the present invention, and that the invention is hereby illustrated and comprehends the entire class of enzymes of thermophilic origin.

EXAMPLE 9

Purification of the *Thermus thermophilus* DNA polymerase III

All steps in the purification assay were performed at 4°C. The following assay was used in the purification of DNA polymerase from *T.th.* cell extracts. Assays contained 2.5 mg activated calf thymus DNA (Sigma Chemical Company) in a final volume of 25 ml of 20 mM Tris-Cl (pH 7.5), 8 mM $MgCl_2$, 5 mM DTT, 0.5 mM EDTA, 40 mg/ml BSA, 4% glycerol, 0.5 mM ATP, 3 mM each dCTP, dGTP, dATP, and 20 mM [α-^{32}P]dTTP. An aliquot of the fraction to be assayed was added to the assay mixture on ice followed by incubation at 60°C for 5 min. DNA synthesis was quantitated using DE81 paper followed by washing off unincorporated nucleotide. Incorporated nucleotide was determined by scintillation counting of the filters.

Thermus thermophilus cell extracts were prepared by suspending 35 grams of cell paste in 200 ml of 50 mM TRIS-HCl, pH=7.5, 30 mM spermidine, 100 mM NaCl, 0.5 mM EDTA, 5 mM DTT, 5% glycerol, followed by disruption by passage through a French pressure cell (15,000 PSI). Cell debris was removed by centrifugation (12,000 RPM, 60 min). DNA polymerase III in the clarified supernatant was precipitated by treatment with ammonium sulphate (0.226 gm/liter) and recovered by centrifugation. This fraction was then backwashed with the same buffer (but lacking spermidine) containing 0.20 gm/l ammonium sulfate. The pellet was then resuspended in buffer A and dialyzed overnight against 2 liters of buffer A; a precipitate which formed during dialysis was removed by centrifugation (17,000 RPM, 20 min).

The clarified dialysis supernatant, containing approximately 336 mg of protein, was applied onto a 60 ml heparin agarose column equilibrated in buffer A which was washed with the same buffer until A280 reached baseline. The column was developed with a 500 ml linear gradient of buffer A from 0 to 500 mM NaCl. More tightly adhered proteins were washed off the column by treatment with buffer A

(20 mM Tris Hcl, pH = 7.5, 0.1 mM EDTA, 5mM DTT, and 10% glycerol) and 1M NaCl. Some DNA polymerase activity flowed through the column. Two peaks (HEP.P1 and HEP.P2) of DNA polymerase activity eluted from the heparin agarose column containing 20 mg and 2 mg of total protein respectively (Fig. 13A). These were kept separate throughout the remainder of the purification protocol.

The Pol III resided in HEP.P1 as indicated by the following criteria: 1) Western analysis using antibody directed against the α subunit of *E. coli* Pol III indicated presence of Pol III in HEP.P1; 2) Only the HEP.P1 fraction was capable of extending a single primer around an M13mp18 7.2 kb ssDNA circle (explained later in Example 16), such long primer extension being a characteristic of Pol III type enzymes; and 3) Only the HEP.P1 provided DNA polymerase activity that was retained on an ATP-agarose affinity column, which is indicative of a Pol III-type DNA polymerase since the γ and τ subunits are ATP interactive proteins.

The first peak of the heparin agarose column (HEP.P1: 20 mg in 127.5 ml) was dialyzed against buffer A and applied onto a 2ml N6-linkage ATP agarose column pre-equilibrated in the same buffer. Bound protein was eluted by a slow (0.05 ml/min) wash with buffer A + 2M NaCl and collected into 200 µl fractions. Chromatography of peak HEP.P1 yielded a flow-through (HEP.P1-ATP-FT) and a bound fraction (HEP.P1-ATP-Bound) (Fig. 13B). Binding of peak HEP.P2 to the ATP column could not be detected, though DNA polymerase activity was recovered in the flow-through.

The HEP.P1-ATP-Bound fractions from the ATP agarose chromatographic step were further purified by anion exchange over monoQ. The HEP.P1-ATP-Bound fractions were diluted with buffer A to approximately the conductivity of buffer A plus 25 mM NaCl and applied to a 1ml monoQ column equilibrated in Buffer A. DNA polymerase activity eluted in the flow-through and in two resolved chromatographic peaks (MONOQ peak1 and peak2) (Fig. 13C). Peak 2 was by far the major source of DNA polymerase activity. Western analysis using rabbit antibody directed against the *E. coli* α subunit confirmed presence of the α subunit in the second peak (see the Western analysis in Fig. 14B). Antibody against the *E. coli* τ subunit also confirmed the presence of the τ subunit in the second peak. Some reaction against α and τ was also present in the minor peak (first peak). The Coomassie Blue SDS polyacrylamide gel of the MonoQ fractions (Fig. 14A) showed

a band that co-migrated with *E. coli* α and was in the same postion as the antibody reactive material (antibody against *E. coli* α). Also present are bands corresponding to τ, γ, δ, and δ'. These subunits, along with ß, are all that is necessary for rapid and processive synthesis and primer extension over a long (> 7 kb) stretch of ssDNA in the *case of E. coli* DNA Polymerase III holoenzyme.

The Pol III-type enzyme purified from *T.th.* may be a Pol III*-like enzyme that contains the DNA polymerase and clamp loader subuits (i.e., like the Pol III* of *E. coli*). The evidence for this is: 1) the presence of *dnaX* and *dnaE* gene products in the same column fractions as indicated by Western analysis (see above); 2) the ability of this enzyme to extend a primer around a 7.2 kb circular ssDNA upon adding only ß (see Example 16); 3) stimulation of Pol III by adding ß on linear DNA, indicating ß subunit is not present in saturating amounts (see Example 15); and 4) the presence of τ in *T.th.* which may glue the polymerase and clamp loader into a Pol III* as in *E. coli*; and 5) the comigration of α with subunits τ, γ, δ and δ' of the clamp loader in the column fractions of the last chromatographic step (MonoQ, Fig. 14A).

Micro-sequencing of T. th DNA Polymerase III α subunit

The α subunit from the purified *T.th* DNA polymerase III (HEP.P1.ATP-Bound.MONOQ peak2) was blotted onto PVDF membrane and was cut out of the SDS-PAGE gel and submitted to the Protein-Nucleic Acid Facility at Rockefeller University for N-terminal sequencing and proteolytic digestion, purification and microsequencing of the resultant peptides. Analysis of the α candidate band (Mw 130kD) yielded four peptides, two of which (TTH1, TTH2) showed sequence similarity to α subunits from various bacterial sources (see Fig. 15).

EXAMPLE 10

Identification of the *Thermus thermophilus dnaE* gene encoding the α subunit of DNA polymerase III replication enzyme

Cloning of the *dnaE* gene was started with the sequence of the TTH1 peptide from the purified α subunit (FFIEIQNHGLSEQK) (SEQ. ID. No. 61). The fragment was aligned to a region at approximately 180 amino acids downstream of the N-termini of several other known α subunits as shown in Fig. 15. The upstream

33mer (5'-GTGGGATCCGTGGTTCTGGATCTCGATGAAGAA-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 31) consists of a BamHI site within the first 9 nucleotides (underlined) and the sequence coding for the following peptide HGLSEQK on the complementary strand. The downstream 29mer (5'-GTGGGATCCACGGSCTSTCSGAGCAGAAG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 32) consists of a BamHI site within the first 9 nucleotides (underlined) and the following sequence coding for the peptide FFIEIQNH (SEQ. ID. No. 62).

These two primers were directed away from each other for the purpose of perfoming inverse PCR (also called circular PCR). The amplification reactions contained 10ng *T.th.* genomic DNA (that had been cut and religated with XmaI), 0.5 mM of each primer, in a volume of 100 µl of Vent polymerase reaction mixture containing 10 µl ThermoPol Buffer, 0.5 mM of each dNTP and 0.25 mM $MgSO_4$. Amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme:

1. 4 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 45°C – 30 sec., 75°C – 8 min.
2. 6 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 50°C – 30 sec., 75°C – 6 min.
3. 30 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 52.5°C – 30 sec., 75°C – 5 min.

A 1.4kb fragment was obtained and cloned into pBS-SK:BamHI (i.e. pBS-SK (Stratragene) was cut with BamHI). This sequence was bracketted by the 29mer primer on both sides and contained the sequence coding for the N-terminal part of the subunit up to the peptide used for primer design.

To obtain further *dnaE* gene sequence, the *TTH2* peptide was used. It was aligned to a region about 600 amino acids from the N-termini of the other known subunits (Fig. 15B).

The upstream 34mer (5'-GCGGGATCCTCAACGAGGACCTCTCCATCTTCAA-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 33) consists of a BamHI site within the first 9 nucleotides (underlined) and the sequence from the end of the fragment previously obtained. The downstream 35mer (5'-GCGGGATCCTTGTCGTCSAGSGTSAGSGCGTCGTA-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 34) consists of a BamHI site within the first 9 nucleotides (underlined) and the following sequence coding for the peptide YDALTLDD (SEQ. ID. No. 63) on the complementary strand. The amplification reactions contained 10 ng *T.th.* genomic DNA, 0.5 mM of each primer, in a volume of 100 µl of Vent polymerase reaction mixture containing 10 µl ThermoPol Buffer, 0.5 mM of each dNTP and 0.25 mM $MgSO_4$. Amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme:

1. 4 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 45°C – 30 sec., 75°C – 8 min.
2. 6 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 50°C – 30 sec., 75°C – 6 min.
3. 30 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 55°C – 30 sec., 75°C – 5 min.

A 1.2kb PCR fragment was obtained and cloned into pUC19:BamHI. The fragment was bracketted by the downstream primer on both sides and contained the region overlapping in 56 bp with the fragment previously cloned.

To obtain yet more *dnaE* sequence, the following primers were used. The upstream 39mer (3'-GTGTGGATCCTCGTCCCCCTCATGCGCGACCAGGAAGGG-5') (SEQ. ID. Nos. 35 and 114) consists of a BamHI site within the first 10 nucleotides (underlined) and the sequence from the end of the fragment previously obtained. The downstream 27mer (5'-GTGTGGATCCTTCTTCTTSCCCATSGC-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 36) consists of a BamHI site within the first 10 nucleotides (underlined), and the sequence coding for the peptide AMGKKK (SEQ. ID. No. 64) (at position approximately 800 residues from the N terminus) on the complementary strand. The AMGKKK (SEQ. ID. No. 64) sequence was chosen for primer design as it is highly conserved among the known gram-negative α subunits. The amplification reactions contained 10 ng *T.th.* genomic DNA, 0.5 mM of each primer, in a volume of 100 µl of Taq polymerase reaction mixture containing 10 µl PCR Buffer, 0.5 mM of each dNTP and 2.5 mM $MgCl_2$. Amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme:

1. 3 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 45°C – 30 sec., 72°C – 8 min.
2. 6 cycles of: 94.5°C – 30 sec., 55°C – 30 sec., 72°C – 6 min.
3. 32 cycles of: 94.5°C – 30 sec., 50°C – 30 sec., 72°C – 5 min.

A 2.3kb PCR fragment was obtained instead of the expected 0.6 kb fragment. BamHI digestion of the PCR product resulted in three fragments of 1.1 kb, 0.7kb and 0.5kb. The 1.1 kb fragment was cloned into pUC19:BamHI. It turned out to be the one adjacent to the fragment previously obtained and contained the *dnaE* sequence right up to the region coding for the AMGKKK (SEQ. ID. No. 64) peptide, but was disrupted by an intron just upstream of this region. The sequence that follows this was amplified from the 2.3kb original PCR product using the same conditions and cycling scheme as for the 2.3kb fragment. The downstream primer was the same as in the previous step. The upstream 27mer (3'-GTGTGGATCCGTGGTGACCTTAGCCAC-5') (SEQ. ID. Nos. 37 and 115)

consisted of a BamHI site within the first 9 nucleotides (underlined) and the sequence from the end of the 1.1kb fragment previously described.

The expected 1.2kb PCR fragment was obtained and cloned into pUC19:SmaI. This fragment coded for the rest of the intein and the end of it was used to obtain the next sequence of *dnaE* downstream of this region. The upstream 30mer (3'-TTCGTGTCCGAGGACCTTGTGGTCCACAAC-5') (SEQ. ID. Nos. 38 and 116) was a sequence from the end of the intron. The downstream 23mer (5'-CCAGAATCGTCTGCTGGTCGTAG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 39) was the sequence from the end of the *dnaE* gene of *D.rad.* (coding on the complementary strand for the region slightly homologous in the distantly related α subunits and possibly highly homologous between *T.th.* and *D.rad.* α subunits). The amplification reactions contained 10 ng *T.th.* genomic DNA, 0.5 mM of each primer, in a volume of 100 µl of Vent polymerase reaction mixture containing 10 µl ThermoPol Buffer, 0.5 mM of each dNTP and 0.1 mM $MgSO_4$. Amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme:

1. 3 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 55°C – 30 sec., 75°C – 8 min.
2. 32 cycles of: 94.5°C – 30 sec., 50°C – 30 sec., 75°C – 5 min.

A 2.5kb PCR fragment was obtained and cloned into pUC19:SmaI. This fragment contained the dnaE sequence coding for the 300 mino acids next to the AMGKKK (SEQ. ID. No. 64) region disrupted by yet a second intein inside another sequence that is conserved among the known α subunits (FNKSHSAAY) (SEQ. ID. No. 65).

To obtain the rest of the *dnaE* gene the upstream 19mer (5'-AGCACCCTGGAGGAGCTTC-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 40) from the end of the known *dnaE* sequence was used. The downstream primer was: 5'-CATGTCGTACTGGGTGTAC-3' (SEQ. ID. No. 41). The amplification reactions contained 10 ng *T.th.* genomic DNA, 0.5 mM of each primer, in a volume of 100 µl of Vent polymerase reaction mixture containing 10 µl ThermoPol Buffer, 0.5 mM of each dNTP and 0.1 mM $MgSO_4$. Amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme:

1. 3 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 55°C – 30 sec., 75°C – 8 min.
2. 32 cycles of: 94.5°C – 30 sec., 50°C – 30 sec., 75°C – 5 min.

A 1.0kb fragment bracketed by this upstream primer was obtained. It contained the 3' end of the *dnaE* gene.

EXAMPLE 11

Cloning and Expression of the *Thermus thermophilus dnaQ* gene encoding the ε subunit of DNA polymerase III replication enzyme

Cloning of *dnaQ*

The *dnaQ* gene of *E. coli* and the corresponding region of PolC of *B. subtilis*, evolutionary divergent organisms, share approximately 30% identity. Comparison of the predicted amino acid sequences for DnaQ (ε) of *E. coli* and PolC of *B. subtilis* revealed two highly conserved regions (Fig. 17). Within each of these regions, a nine amino acid sequence was used to design two oligonucleotide primers for use in the polymerase chain reaction.

The regions highly conservative among Pol III exonucleases were chosen to design the degenerate primers for the amplification of a *T.th. dnaQ* internal fragment (see Fig. 17). DNA oligonucleotides for amplification of *T.th.* genomic DNA were as follows. The upstream 27mer (5'-GTSGTSNNSGACNNSGAGACSACSGGG-3' (SEQ. ID. No. 42)) encodes the following sequence (VVXDXETTG) (SEQ. ID. No. 66). The downstream 27mer (5'-GAASCCSNNGTCGAASNNGGCGTTGTG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 43) encodes the sequence HNAXFDXGF (SEQ. ID. No. 67) on the complementary strand. The amplification reactions contained 10 ng *T.th.* genomic DNA, 0.5 mM of each primer, in a volume of 100 µl of Vent polymerase reaction mixture containing 10 µl ThermoPol Buffer, 0.5 mM of each dNTP and 0.5 mM $MgSO_4$. Amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme:

1. 5 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 40°C – 30 sec., 72°C – 2 min.
2. 5 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 45°C – 30 sec., 72°C – 2 min.
3. 30 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 50°C – 30 sec., 72°C – 30 min.

Products were visualized in a 1.5 % native agarose gel. A fragment of the expected size of 270 bp was cloned into the SmaI site of pUC19 and sequenced with the CircumVent Thermal Cycle DNA sequencing kit accordinig to the manufacturer's instructions (New England Biolabs).

To obtain further sequence of the *dnaQ* gene, genomic DNA was digested with either mhoI, BamHI, KpnI or NcoI. These restriction enzymes were chosen because they cut *T.th.* genomic DNA frequently. Approximately 0.1 μg of DNA for each digest was ligated by T4 DNA ligase in 50 μl of ligation buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.8), 10 mM $MgCl_2$, 10 mM dithiothreitol, 1 mM ATP, 25 mg/ml bovine serum albumin) overnight at 20°C. The ligation mixtures were used for cicular PCR.

DNA oligonucleotides for amplification of *T.th.* genomic DNA were the following. The upstream 27mer (5'-CGGGGATCCACCTCAATCACCTCGTGG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 44) consists of a BamHI site within the first 9 nucleotides (underlined) and the sequence complementary to 42-61bp region of the previously cloned *dnaQ* fragment. The downstream 30mer (5'-CGGGGATCCGCCACCTTGCGGCTCCGGGTG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 45) consists of a BamHI site within the first 9 nucleotides (underlined) and the sequence corresponding to 240-261 bp region of the *dnaQ* fragment (see Fig. 17).

The amplification reactions contained 1 ng *T.th.* genomic DNA (that had been cut with NcoI and religated into circular DNA for circular PCR), 0.4 mM of each primer, in a volume of 100 μl of Vent polymerase reaction mixture containing 10 μl ThermoPol Buffer, 0.5 mM of each dNTP, 0.5 mM $MgSO_4$, and 10% DMSO. Circular amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme:

1. 5 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 50°C – 30 sec., 72°C – 8 min.
2. 35 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 55°C – 30 sec., 72°C – 6 min.
3. 72°C – 10 min.

A 1.5 kb fragment was obtained and cloned into the BamHI site of the pUC19 vector. Partial sequencing of the fragment reveiled that it contained the *dnaQ* regions adjacent to sequences corresponding to the PCR primers and hence contained the sequences both upstream and downstream of the previously cloned *dnaQ* fragment. One of NcoI sites turned out to be approximatly 300 bp downstream of the end of the first cloned *dnaQ* sequence and hence did not include the 3' end of *dnaQ*. To obtain the 3' end, another inverse PCR reaction was performed. Since an ApaI restiction site was recognized within this newly sequenced *dnaQ* fragment, the circular PCR procedure was performed using as template an ApaI digest of *T.th.* genomic DNA that was ligated (circularized) under the same conditions as described above.

DNA oligonucleotides for amplification of the ApaI/religated *T.th.* genomic DNA were as follows. The upstream 31mer (5'-GCGCTCTAGACGAGTTCCCAAAGCGTGCGGT-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 46) consists of a mbaI site within the first 10 nucleotides (underlined) and the sequence complementary to the region downstream of the ApaI restriction site in the newly sequenced *dnaQ* fragment. The downstream 25 mer (5'-CGCGTCTAGATCACCTGTATCCAGA-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 47) consists of a XbaI site within the first 10 nucleotides (underlined) and the sequence corresponding to another region downstream of the ApaI restriction site in the newly sequenced *dnaQ* fragment. The 1.7 kb PCR fragment was cloned into the XbaI site of the pUC19 vector and partially sequenced. The sequence of *dnaQ*, and the protein sequence of the ε subunit encoded by it, is shown in Fig. 18.

The *dnaQ* gene is encoded by an open reading frame of 209 (or 190 depending on which Val is used as the initiating residue) amino acids in length (23598.5 kDa - or 21383.8 kDa for shorter version), similar to the length of the *E. coli* ε subunit (243 amino acids, 27099.1 kDa mass) (see Fig. 17).

The entire amino acid sequence of the ε subunit predicted from the *T.th. dnaQ* gene aligns with the predicted amino acid sequence of the *dnaQ* genes of other organisms with only a few gaps and insertions (the first two amino acids, and four positions downstream) (Fig. 17). The consensus motifs VVXDXETTG (SEQ. ID. Nos. 66 and 68), HNAXFDXGF (SEQ. ID. No. 67), and HRALYD (SEQ. ID. No. 70), characteristic for exonucleases, are conserved. Overall, the level of amino acid identity relative to most of the known ε subunits, or corresponding proofreading exonuclease domains of gram positive PolC genes is approximately 30%. Upstream of start 1 (Fig. 17) there were stop codons in all three reading frames.

Expression of *dnaQ*

The *dnaQ* gene was cloned gene into the pET24-a expression vector in two steps. First, the PCR fragment encoding the N-terminal part of the gene was cloned into the pUC19 plasmid, containing the ApaI inverse PCR fragment into NdeI/ApaI sites. DNA oligonucleotides for amplification of *T.th.* genomic DNA were as follows. The upstream 33mer (5'-GCGGCGCATATGGTGGTGGTCCTGGACCTGGAG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 48)

consists of an NdeI site within the first 12 nucleotides (underlined) and the begining of the *dnaQ* gene. The downstream 25 mer (5'-CGCGTCTAGATCACCTGTATCCAGA-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 49), already used for ApaI circular PCR, consists of an XbaI site within the first 10 nucleotides (underlined) and the sequence corresponding to the region downstream of the ApaI restriction site. The 2.2 kb NdeI/SalI fragment was then cloned into the NdeI/XhoI sites of the pET16 vector to produce pET24-a:*dnaQ*. The ε subunit was expressed in the BL21/LysS strain transformed by the pET24-a:*dnaQ* plasmid.

EXAMPLE 12

The *Thermus thermophilus dnaN* gene encoding the ß subunit of DNA polymerase III replication enzyme

Strategy of cloning *dnaN* by use of *dnaA*

DnaN proteins are highly divergent in bacteria making it difficult to clone them by homology. The level of identity between DnaN representatives from *E. coli* and *B. subtilis* is as low as 18%. These 18% of identical amino acid residues are dispersed through the proteins rather then clustering together in conservative regions, further complicating use of homology to design PCR primers. However, one feature of *dnaN* genes among widely different bacteria is their location in the chromosome. They appear to be near the origin, and immediately adjacent to the *dnaA* gene. The d*naA* genes show good homology among different bacteria and, thus, *dnaA* was first cloned in order to obtain a DNA probe that is likely near *dnaN*.

Identification of *dnaA* and *dnaN*

The *dnaA* genes of *E. coli* and *B. subtilis* share 58% identity at the amino acid sequence level within the ATP-binding domain (or among the representatives of gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria, evolutionary divergent organisms). Comparison of the predicted amino acid sequences encoded by *dnaA* of *E. coli* and *B. subtilis* revealed two highly conserved regions (Fig. 19). Within each of these regions, a seven amino acid sequence was used to design two oligonucleotide primers for use in the polymerase chain reaction. The DNA oligonucleotides for amplification of *T.th.* genomic DNA were as follows. The upstream 20mer

(5'-GTSCTSGTSAAGACSCACTT-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 50) encodes the following sequence: VLVKTHL (SEQ. ID. No. 69). The downstream 21mer (5'-SAGSAGSGCGTTGAASGTGTG-3', where S is G or C) (SEQ. ID. No. 51) encodes the sequence: HTFNALL (SEQ. ID. No. 71), on the complementary strand. The amplification reactions contained 10 ng *T.th.* genomic DNA, 0.5 mM of each primer, in a volume of 100 µl of Vent polymerase reaction mixture containing 10 µl ThermoPol Buffer, 0.5 mM of each dNTP and 0.5 mM $MgSO_4$. Amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme:

1. 5 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 45°C – 30 sec., 75°C – 2 min.
2. 5 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 50°C - 30 sec., 75°C – 2 min.
3. 30 cycles of: 95.5°C – 30 sec., 52°C - 30 sec., 75°C - 30 min.

Products were visualized in a 1.5% native agarose gel. A fragment of the expected size of 300 bp was cloned into the SmaI site of pUC19 and sequenced with the CircumVent Thermal Cycle DNA sequencing kit (New England Biolabs).

To obtain a larger section of the *T.th. dnaA* gene, genomic DNA was digested with either HaeII, HindIII, KasI, KpnI, MluI, NcoI, NgoMI, NheI, NsiI, PaeR7I, PstI, SacI, SalI, SpeI, SphI, StuI, or XhoI, followed by Southern analysis in a native agarose gel. The filter was probed with the 300 bp PCR product radiolabeled by random priming. Four different restriction digests showed a single fragment of reasonable size for further cloning. These were, KasI, NgoMI, and StuI, all of which produced fragments of about 3 kb, and NcoI that produced a 2kb fragment. Also, a KpnI digest resulted in two fragments of about 1.5 kb and 10 kb.

Genomic DNA digests using either NgoMI and StuI were used to obtain the *dnaA* gene by inverse PCR (also referred to as circular PCR). In this procedure, 0.1 µg of DNA from each digest was treated separately with T4 DNA ligase in 50 µl of ligation buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.8), 10 mM $MgCl_2$, 10 mM dithiothreitol, 1 mM ATP, 25 mg/ml bovine serum albumin) overnight at 20°C. This results in circularizing the genomic DNA fragments. The ligation mixtures were used as substrate in inverse PCR.

DNA oligonucleotides for amplification of recircularized *T.th.* genomic DNA were as follows. The upstream 22mer was (5'-CTCGTTGGTGAAAGTTTCCGTG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 52), and the downstream 24mer was (5'-CGTCCAGTTCATCGCCGGAAAGGA-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 53). The

amplification reactions contained 5 ng *T.th.* genomic DNA, 0.5 μM of each primer, in a volume of 100 μl of Taq polymerase reaction mixture containing 10 μl PCR Buffer, 0.5 mM of each dNTP and 2.5 mM $MgCl_2$. Amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme:

1. 5 cycles of: 95.0°C - 30 sec., 55°C - 30 sec., 72°C – 10 min.
2. 35 cycles of: 95.5°C - 30 sec., 50°C - 30 sec., 72°C – 8 min.

The PCR fragments of the expected length for NgoMI and StuI treated and then ligated chromosomal DNA were digested with either BamHI or Sau3a and cloned into pUC19:BamHI and pUC19:(BamHI+SmaI) and sequenced with CircumVent Thermal Cycle DNA sequencing kit. The 1.6kb (BamHI+BamH) fragment from the NgoMI PCR product contained a sequence coding for the N-terminal part of *dnaN*, followed by the gene for enolase. The 1kb (Sau3a+Sau3a) fragment from the same PCR product included the start of *dnaN* gene and sequence characteristic of the origin of replication (i.e., 9mer DnaA-binding site sequences). The 0.6kb (BamHI+BamHI) fragment from the StuI PCR reaction contained starts for *dnaA* and *gidA* genes in inverse orientation to each other. The 0.4 kb (Sau3a+Sau3a) fragment from the same PCR product contained the 3' end of the *dnaA* gene and DNA sequence characteristic for the origin of replication.

This sequence information provided the beginning and end of both the *dnaA* and the *dnaN* genes. Hence, these genes were easily cloned from this information. Further, the dnaN gene was readily cloned and expressed in a pET24-a vector. These steps are described below.

Cloning and sequence of the *dnaA* gene

The *dnaA* gene was cloned for sequencing in two parts: from the potential start of the gene up to its middle and from the middle up to the end. For the N-terminal part, the upstream 27mer (5'-TCTGGCAACACGTTCTGGAGCACATCC-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 54) was 20 bp downsteam of the potential start codon of the gene. The downstream 23mer (5'-TGCTGGCGTTCATCTTCAGGATG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 55) was approximately from the middle of the *dnaA* gene. For the C-terminal part, the upstream 23mer (5'-CATCCTGAAGATGAACGCCAGCA-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 56) was complementary to the previous primer. The downstream 25mer

(5'-AGGTTATCCACAGGGGTCATGTGCA-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 57) was 20 bp upstream the potential stop codon for the *dnaA* gene. The amplification reactions contained 10 ng *T.th.* genomic DNA, 0.5 μM of each primer, in a volume of 100 μl of Vent polymerase reaction mixture containing 10 μl ThermoPol Buffer, 0.5 mM of each dNTP and 0.5 mM $MgSO_4$. Amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme:

1. 5 cycles of: 95.5°C - 30 sec., 55°C - 30 sec., 75°C – 3 min.
2. 30 cycles of: 95.5°C - 30 sec., 50°C - 30 sec., 75°C – 2 min.

Products were visualized in a 1.0% native agarose gel. Fragments of the expected sizes of 750 bp and 650 bp were produced, and were sequenced using CircumVent Thermal Cycle DNA sequencing method (New England Biolabs). The nucleotide and amino acid sequences of *dnaA* and its protein product are shown in Fig. 20. The DnaA protein is homologous to the DnaA proteins of several other bacteria as shown in Fig. 19.

Cloning and expression of *dnaN*

The full length *dnaN* gene was obtained by PCR from *T.th.* total DNA. DNA oligonucleotides for amplification of *T.th. dnaN* were the following: the upstream 29mer (5'-GTGTGTCATATGAACATAACGGTTCCCAA-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 58) consists of an NdeI site within first 11 nucleotides (underlined), followed by the sequence for the start of the *dnaN* gene; the downstream 29mer (5'-GCGCGAATTCTCCCTTGTGGAAGGCTTAG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 59) consists of an EcoRI site within the first 10 nucleotides (underlined), followed by the sequence complementary to a section just downstream of the *dnaN* stop codon. The amplification reactions contained 10 ng *T.th.* genomic DNA, 0.5 μM of each primer, in a volume of 100 μl of Vent polymerase reaction mixture containing 10 μl Thermopol Buffer, 0.5 mM of each dNTP and 0.2 mM $MgSO_4$. Amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme:

1. 5 cycles of: 95.0°C - 30 sec., 55°C - 30 sec., 75°C – 5 min.
2. 35 cycles of: 95.5°C - 30 sec., 50°C - 30 sec., 75°C – 4 min.

The nucleotide and amino acid sequences of *dnaN* and the ß subunit, respectively, are shown in Fig. 21. The *T.th.* ß subunit shows limited homology to the ß subunit sequences of several other bacteria over its entire length (Fig. 22).

The approximately 1 kb *dnaN* gene was cloned into the pET24-a expression vector using the NdeI and EcoRI restriction sites both in the *dnaN* containing PCR product and in pEt24-a (Fig. 23). Expression of *T.th.* ß subunit was obtained under the following conditions: a fresh colony of Bl21(DE3) *E.coli* strain was transformed by the pET24-a:dnaN plasmid, and then was grown in LB broth containing 50 mg/ml kanamycin at 37°C until the cell density reached 0.4 OD_{600}. The cell culture was then induced for *dnaN* expression upon addition of 2 mM IPTG. Cells were harvested after 4 additional hours of growth under 37°C. The induction of the *T.th.* ß subunit is shown in Fig. 24.

Two liters of BL21(DE3)pET*dnaN*cells were grown in LB media containing 50 mg/ml ampicillin at 37°C to an O.D. of 0.8 and then IPTG was added to a concentration of 2 mM. After a further 2 h at 37°C, cells were harvested by centrifugation and stored at -70°C. The following steps were performed at 4°C. Cells were thawed and resuspended in 40 ml of 5 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.0), 1% sucrose, 1M NaCl, 5 mM DTT, and 30 mM spermidine. Cells were lysed using a French Pressure cell at 20,000 psi. The lysate was allowed to sit at 4°C for 30 min. and then cell debris was removed by centrifugation (Sorvall SS-34 rotor, 45 min. 18,000 rpm). The supernatant was incubated at 65°C for 20 minutes with occasional stirring. The resulting protein precipitate was removed by centrifugation as described above. The supernatant was dialyzed against 4 liters of buffer A containing 50 mM NaCl overnight. The dialyzed supernatant was clarified by centrifugation (35 ml, 150 mg total) and then loaded onto an 8 ml MonoQ column equilibrated in buffer A containing 50 mM NaCl. The column was washed with 5 column volumes of the same buffer and then eluted with a 120 ml gradient of buffer A plus 50 mM NaCl to buffer A plus 500 mM NaCl. Fractions of 2 ml were collected. Over 50 mg of *T.th.* ß was recovered in fractions 5-21.

EXAMPLE 13

Identification and cloning of *T. thermophilus holA*

A search of the incomplete *T.th.* genome database (www.g21.bio.uni-goettingen.de) showed a match to *E. coli* δ encoded by *holA*. The sequence obtained from the database was as follows (SEQ. ID. No. 185):

TPKGKDLVRHLENRAKRLGLRLPGGVAQYLA-SLEGDLEALERELEKLALLSP
-PLTLEKVEKVVALRPPLTGFDLVRSVLEKDPKEALLRLGRLKEEGEEPLRLL
GALSWQFALLARAFFLLREMPRPKEEDLARLEAHPYAAKKALL-EAARRLTE
EALKEALDALMEAEKRAKG-GKDPWLALEAAVLRLAR-PAGQPRVD

Next, the following PCR primers were designed from the codon usage of *T.th.*: upstream 27mer (5'- GCC CAG TAC CTC GCC TCC CTC GAG GGG -3') (SEQ. ID. No. 186) and downstream 27mer (5'- GGC CCC CTT GGC CTT CTC GGC CTC CAT -3' (SEQ. ID. No. 187) to obtain a partial *holA* nucleotide sequence (SEQ. ID. No. 188):

```
AGACTCGAGG CCCTGGAGCG GGAGCTGGAG AAGCTTGCCC TCCTCTCCCC ACCCCTCACC    60
CTGGAGAAGG TGGAGAAGGT GGTGGCCCTG AGGCCCCCCC TCACGGGCTT TGACCTGGTG   120
CGCTCCGTCC TGGAGAAGGA CCCCAAGGAG GCCCTCCTGC GCCTCAGGCG CCTCAGGGAG   180
GAGGGGGAGG AGCCCCTCAG GCTCCTCGGG GCCCTCTCCT GGCAGTTCGC CCTCCTCGCC   240
CGGGCCTTCT TCCTCCTCCG GGAAAACCCC AGGCCCAAGG AGGAGGACCT CGCCCGCCTC   300
GAGGCCCACC CCTACGCCGC CAAGAAGGCC A                                   331
```

This sequence codes for a partial amino acid sequence of the *T.th.* δ subunit (SEQ. ID. No. 189):

RLEALERELEKLALLSPPLTLEKVEKVVALRPPLTGFDLVRSVLEKDPKEALL
RLRRLREEGEEPLRLLGALSWQFALLARAFFLLRENPRPKEEDLARLEAHPYA
AKKA

The DNA sequence obtained by PCR (SEQ. ID. No. 188) was used to design internal primers for inverted PCR. The upstream 31mer (5'-

GTGGTGTCTAGACATCATAACGGTTCTGGCA-3') (SEQ. ID. NO. 190) introduced an XbaI site for cloning *holA* into a pGEX vector. The downstream 27mer (5'-GAGGGCCACCACCTTCTCCACCTTCTC-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 191) encodes *holA* sequence EKVEKVVAL (aa residues 159-167 of SEQ. ID. No. 158) on the complementary strand. The amplification reactions contained 50ng *T.th.* genomic DNA and 0.1 uM of each primer in a volume of 100µl of Vent polymerase reaction mixture containing 10 µl ThermoPol Buffer, 2.5 mM of each dNTP, 2 mM $MgSO_4$, and 10 µl of formamide. Amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme:

1. 5 cycles of: 95°C - 30 sec., 65°C - 20 sec., 75°C - 5 min.
2. 5 cycles of: 95°C - 20 sec., 58°C - 10 sec., 75°C - 5 min.
3. 35 cycles of: 95°C - 20 sec., 50°C - 5 sec., 75°C – 4 min.

Products were visualized in a 1.0% native agarose gel. A fragment of 1.5 Kb was gel purified and partially sequenced.

A different set of primers were used to obtain the 3'-end of *T.th. holA*, including an upstream 25mer (5'-CTCCGTCCTGGAGAAGGACCCCAAG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 192) which encoded the amino acid sequence SVLEKDPK from *T.th. holA* (aa residues 179-186 of SEQ. ID. No. 158), and a downstream 29mer (5'-CGCGAATTCAACGCSCTCCTCAAGACSCT-3' where S = C or G) (SEQ. ID. No. 193) was not related to the *holA* sequence. The amplification reactions contained 50ng *T.th.* genomic DNA and 0.1 µM of each primer in a volume of 100 µl of Vent polymerase reaction mixture containing 10 µl ThermoPol Buffer, 2.5 mM of each dNTP, and 1-2 mM $MgSO_4$, and 10 µl of formamide. Amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme:

1. 5 cycles of: 95°C - 30 sec., 65°C - 20 sec., 75°C - 5 min.
2. 5 cycles of: 95°C - 20 sec., 55°C - 10 sec., 75°C - 5 min.
3. 35 cycles of: 95°C - 20 sec., 50°C - 5 sec., 75°C – 4 min.

Products were visualized in a 1.0% native agarose gel. A fragment of 1.2 Kb was gel purified and partially sequenced to obtain the remainder of the *T.th. holA* gene.

The *T.th. holA* gene was cloned into the NdeI/EcoRI sites in the pET24 vector using a pair of primers. The upstream 31mer (5'-GACACTTAACATATGGTCATCGCCTTCACCG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 194) contains a NdeI site within the first 15 nucleotides (underlined) and has a sequence

corresponding to 5' region of *T.th. holA*. The downstream 38 mer (5'-GTGTGTGAATTCGGGTCAACGGGCGAGGCGGAGGACCG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 195) contains a EcoRI site within the first 12 nucleotides (underlined) and has a sequence complementary to the 3' end of *holA* gene.

EXAMPLE 14

Identification of *T.th. holB* encoding δ' subunit

To clone the ends of *T.th. holB* gene, it was assumed that the order of genes in *Thermus thermophilis* could be the same as in related *Deinococcus radiodurance*. Multiple alignment of the upstream neighbor (probable phosphoesterase, DNA repair Rad24c related protein) revealed a conservative region close to the C-terminus of the protein sequence:

Deinococcus radiodurance	VILNPGSVGQ	(SEQ. ID. No. 196)
Methanococcus janaschii	YLINPGSVGQ	(SEQ. ID. No. 197)
Thermotoga maritima	LVLNPGSAGR	(SEQ. ID. No. 198)

The *D.rad.* sequence was used to design an upstream 28mer primer (5'-CTGGTGAACCCGGGCTCCGTGGGCCAGC-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 199) that encodes the amino acid sequence LLVNPGSVGQ (SEQ. ID. No. 200) and a downstream 27mer (5'-CTCGAGGAGCTTGAGGAGGGTGTTGGC-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 201) encodes the sequence ANTLLKLLE (SEQ. ID. No. 202) on the complementary strand. The amplification reactions contained 50ng *T.th.* genomic DNA and 0.1 μM of each primer in a volume of 100μl of Deep Vent polymerase reaction mixture containing 10 μl ThermoPol Buffer, 2.5 mM of each dNTP, 1.5 mM $MgSO_4$, and 10μl formamide. Amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme:

1. 5 cycles of: 95°C - 30 sec., 68°C - 20 sec., 75°C - 3 min.
2. 5 cycles of: 95°C - 20 sec., 63°C - 20 sec., 75°C - 3 min.
3. 35 cycles of: 95°C - 20 sec., 55°C - 10 sec., 75°C – 3 min.

Product was visualized in a 1.0% native agarose gel as a single band of 0.7 Kb. The fragment was purified and partially sequenced.

Multiple alignment of the gene downstream of *D.rad.* identified the following conservative region:

Deinococcus radiodurans GFGG**VQLHAAHGYLL**SQFLSPRHNVREDEYGG (SEQ. ID. No. 203)

Caenorhabditis elegans GFDG**IQLHGAHGYLL**SQFTSPTTNKRVDKYGG (SEQ. ID. No. 204)

Pseudomonas aeruginosa GFSG**VEIHAAHGYLL**SQFLSPLSNRRSDAWGG (SEQ. ID. No. 205)

Archaeoglobus fulgidus GFDA**VQLHAAHGYLL**SEFISPHVNRRKDEYGG (SEQ. ID. No. 206)

The fragment in bold was used to design primers, specifically the downstream primer, for cloning of the 3' region of the *T.th. holB* gene. The upstream 30mer (5'-CATCCTGGACTCGGCCCACCTCCTCACCGA-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 207) encodes the amino acid sequence ILDSAHLLT (SEQ. ID. No. 208). The downstream 33mer (5'- GAGGAGGTAGCCGTGGGCCGCGTGGAGCTCCAC-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 209) encodes the sequence VELHAAHGYLL (SEQ. ID. No. 210) on the complementary strand. The amplification reactions contained 50ng *T.th.* genomic DNA and 0.1 μM of each primer in a volume of 100μl of Deep Vent polymerase reaction mixture containing 10 μl ThermoPol Buffer, 2.5 mM of each dNTP, 2 mM $MgSO_4$, and 10 μl DMSO. Amplification was performed using the following cycling scheme:

1. 5 cycles of: 95°C - 30 sec., 70°C - 20 sec., 75°C - 4 min.
2. 5 cycles of: 95°C - 20 sec., 66°C - 20 sec., 75°C - 4 min.
3. 30 cycles of: 95°C - 20 sec., 60°C - 10 sec., 77°C – 4 min.

Products were visualized in a 1.0% native agarose gel as a single band of 1.1 kb. The Kb fragment was gel purified and sequenced to provide the remainder of the *holB* gene encoding *T.th.* δ'.

For protein expression, the *T.th. holB* gene was cloned into the pET24 vector at the Nde:EcoR sites using a pair of primers. The upstream 32mer (5'-GGCTTTCCCATATGGCTCTACACCCGGCTCAC-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 211) contains a NdeI site within the first 15 nucleotides (underlined) and the sequence corresponding to the 5' region of *T.th. holB*. The downstream 29 mer (5'-GCGTGGATCCACGGTCATGTCTCTAAGTC-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 212) contains a BamHI site within the first 10 nucleotides (underlined) and a sequence complementary to the 3' end of the *holB* gene.

EXAMPLE 15

Alternate synthetic path in absence of clamp loader activity

As discussed earlier, the Pol III-type enzyme of the present invention is capable of application and use in a variety of contexts, including a method wherein the clamp loader component that is traditionally involved in the initiation of enzyme activity, is not required. The clamp loader generally functions to increase the efficiency of ring assembly onto circular primed DNA, because both the ring and the DNA are circles and one must be broken transiently for them to become interlocked rings. In such a reaction, the clamp loader increases the efficiency of opening the ring.

The procedure described below illustrates the instance where the clamp loader need not be present. For example, the ß clamp can be assembled onto DNA in the absence of the clamp loader. Particularly, the bulk of primed templates in PCR reactions are linear ssDNA fragments that are primed at the ends. On linear primed DNA, the ring need not open at all. Instead, the ring can simply thread onto the end of the linear primed template (Bauer and Burgers, 1988; Tan et al, 1986; O'Day et al., 1992; Burgers and Yoder, 1993). Hence, on linear primed templates, such as those generated in PCR, the beta clamp can simply slide over the DNA end. After the ring slides onto the end, the DNA polymerase can associate with the ring for enhanced DNA synthesis.

Such "end assembly" is common among Pol III-type enzymes and has been demonstrated in yeast and human systems. Rings assembling onto linear DNA for use by their respective DNA polymerases are shown in the following example

demonstrated in the *E. coli* bacterial system, in the human system, and in the *T.th.* system.

The bulk of the primed templates in PCR reactions are linear ssDNA fragments that are primed at their ends. However, these end primed linear fragments are not generated until after the first step of PCR has already been performed. In the very first step, PCR primers generally anneal at internal sites in a heat denatured ssDNA template. Primed linear templates are then generated in subsequent steps enabling use of this alternate path. For this first step, the clamp may be assembled onto an internal site in the absence of the clamp loader using special conditions that allow clamp assembly in the absence of a clamp loader.

For example, a set of conditions that lead to assembly of the clamp onto circular DNA (i.e., internal primed sites) have been described in the protocol for the use of the bacteriophage T4 ring shaped clamp (gene 45 protein) without the clamp loader (Reddy et al., 1993). In this case, polyethylene glycol leads to "macromolecular crowding" such that the clamp and DNA are pushed together in close proximity, leading to the ring self assembling onto internal primed sites on circular DNA. Other possible conditions that may lead to assembly of rings onto internal sites include use of a high concentration of beta such that use of heat or denaturant to break the dimeric ring into two half rings (crescents) followed by lowering the heat (or dilution or removal of denaturant) leading to rings assembling around the DNA.

The ring shaped sliding clamps of *E. coli* and human slide over the end of linear DNA to activate their respective DNA polymerase in the absence of the clamp loader. This clamp loader independent assay is performed in the bacterial system in Fig. 25A. For this assay, the linear template is polydA primed with oligodT. The polydA is of average length 4500 nucleotides and was purchased from SuperTecs. OligodT35 was synthesized by Oligos etc.. The template was prepared using 145µl of 5.2 mM (as nucleotide) polydA and 22 µl of 1.75 mM (as nucleotide) oligodT. The mixture was incubated in a final volume of 2100 µl T.E. buffer (ratio as nucleotide was 21:1 polydA to oligodT). The mixture was heated to boiling in a 1 ml Eppendorf tube, then removed and allowed to cool to room temperature. Assays were performed in a final volume of 25 µl 20 mM Tris-Cl (pH 7.5), 8 mM $MgCl_2$, 5 mM DTT, 0.5 mM EDTA, 40 mg/ml BSA, 4% glycerol, containing 20 µM [α-^{32}P]dTTP,

0.1 μg polydA-oligodT, 25 ng Pol III and, where present, 5 μg of ß subunit. Proteins were added to the reaction on ice, then shifted to 37°C for 5 min. DNA synthesis was quantitated using DE81 paper as described (Rowen and Kornberg, 1978).

In the linear template assay, no ATP or dATP is provided and therefore, a clamp loader, even if present, is not active. Thus, the clamp (e.g., ß) can only stimulate the DNA polymerase provided the clamp threads onto the DNA (see diagram in Fig. 25). Hence, threading of the clamp is shown by a stimulation of the DNA polymerase. In lane 1 of Fig. 25A, the DNA polymerase is incubated with the the linear DNA in the absence of the clamp, and lane 2 shows the result of adding the clamp. The results show that the clamp is able to thread onto the DNA ends and stimulate the DNA polymerase in the absence of ATP and thus, in the absence of clamp loading as well.

This clamp loader independent assay is performed in the human system in Fig. 25B. The assay reaction (25μl) contains 50 mM Tris-HCl (pH=7.8), 8 mM MgCl2, 1 mM DTT, 1 mM creatine phosphate, 40 μg/ml bovine serum albumin, 0.55 μg human SSB, 100 ng PCNA (where present), 7 units DNA polymerase delta (1 unit incorporates 1 pmol dTMP in 60 min.), 40 mM [α-^{32}P]dTTP and 0.1 μg polydA-oligodT. Proteins were added to the reaction on ice, then shifted to 37°C for 60 min. DNA synthesis was quantitated using DE81 paper as described (Rowen and Kornberg, 1978). In lane 3, (Fig. 25) the DNA polymerase δ is incubated with the linear DNA in the absence of the clamp, and lane 4 showes the result of adding the PCNA clamp. The results demonstrate that the clamp is able to thread onto the DNA ends and stimulate the DNA polymerase in the absence of ATP and thus, the absence of clamp loading.

This clamp loader independent assay is performed in the *T.th.* system in Fig. 25C. The assay reaction is exactly as described above for use of the *E. coli* Pol III and beta system except the temperature is 60°C and here the Pol III is HEP.P1 *T.th.* Pol III (0.5 μl, providing 0.1 units where one unit is equal to 1 pmol of dTTP incorporated in 1 minute under these conditions and in the absence of beta), and the beta subunit is 7 μg *T.th.* ß (from the MonoQ column). Proteins were added to the reaction on ice, then shifted to 37°C for 60 min. DNA synthesis was quantitated using DE81 paper as described (Rowen and Kornberg, 1978). In lane 3 (Fig. 25C), the *T.Th.* Pol III is incubated with the linear DNA in the absence of the clamp, and

lane 4 shows the result of adding the *T.th.* ß clamp. The results demonstrate that the clamp is able to thread onto the DNA ends and stimulate the DNA polymerase in the absence of clamp loader activity.

EXAMPLE 16

Use of *T.th.* Pol III in long chain primer extension

A characteristic of Pol III-type enzymes is their ability to extend a single primer for several kilobases around a long (e.g. 7 kb) circular single stranded DNA genome of a bacteriophage. This reaction uses the circular ß clamp protein. For the circular ß to be assembled onto a circular DNA genome, the circular ß must be opened, positioned around the DNA, and then closed. This assembly of the circular beta around DNA requires the action of the clamp loader, which uses ATP to open and close the ring around DNA. In this example, the 7.2 kb circular single strand DNA genome of bacteriophage M13mp18 was used as a template. This template was primed with a single DNA 57mer oligonucleotide and the Pol III enzyme was tested for conversion of this template to a double strand circular form (RFII). The reaction was supplemented with recombinant *T.th.* ß produced in *E. coli*. This assay is summarized in the scheme at the top of Fig. 26. M13mp18 ssDNA was phenol extracted from phage purified as described (Turner and O'Donnell, 1995). M13mp18 ssDNA was primed with a 57mer DNA oligomer synthesized by Oligos etc. The replication assays contained 73 ng singly primed M13mp18 ssDNA and 100 ng *T.th.* ß subunit in a 25 µl reaction containing 20 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 8 mM $MgCl_2$, 40 µg/ml BSA, 0.1 mM EDTA, 4% glycerol, 0.5 mM ATP, 60 µM each of dCTP, dGTP, dATP and 20 µM α-^{32}P-TTP (specific activity 2,000-4,000 cpm/pmol). Either *T.th.* Pol III from the Heparin, peak 1 (HEP.P1; 5 µl, 0.21 units where 1 unit equals 1 pmol nucleotide incorporated in 1 min.) or a non-Pol III from the Heparin peak 2 (HEP.P2; 5 µl, 2.6 units) were added to the reaction. Reactions were shifted to 60° C for 5 min., and then DNA synthesis was quenched upon adding 25 µl of 1% SDS, 40 mM EDTA. One half of the reaction was analyzed in a 0.8% native agarose gel, and the other half was quantitated using DE81 paper as described (Studwell and O'Donnell, 1990).

The results of the assay are shown in Fig. 26. Lane 1 is the result obtained using the *T.th.* Pol III (HEP.P1) which was capable of extending the primer around the ssDNA circle to form RFII. Lane 2 shows the result of using the non-Pol III (HEP.P2) which was not capable of this extension and produced only incomplete DNA products (the result shown included 0.8 μg *E. coli* SSB which did not increase the chain length of the product). In the absence of SSB, the same product was observed, although the band contained more counts. The greater amount of total synthesis observed in lane 2 is due to the build up of immature products in a small region of the gel. The presence of immature products in lane 1 is likely due to a contaminating polymerase in the preparation that can not convert the single primer to the full length RFII form. Alternatively, the presence of incomplete products in lane 1 (Pol III type enzyme) is due to secondary structure in the DNA which causes the Pol III to pause. In this case it may be presumed that performing the reaction at higher temperature could remove the secondary structure barrier. Alternatively, SSB could be added to the assay (although *T.th.* SSB would be needed, because addition of *E. coli* SSB was tried and did not alter the quality of the product profile). Generally, SSB is needed to remove secondary structure elements from ssDNA at 37°C for complete extension of primers by mesophilic Pol III-type enzymes.

The assay described above was performed at 60°C. The *T.th.* Pol III HEP.P1 gained activity as the temperature was increased from 37°C to 60°C, as expected for an enzyme from a thermophilic source. The *E. coli* Pol III lost activity at 60°C compared to 37°C, as expected for an enzyme from a mesophilic source.

EXAMPLE 17

Materials used in Examples 18-29

Radioactive nucleotide were from Dupont NEN; unlabeled nucleotides were from Pharmacia Upjohn. DNA oligonucleotides were synthesized by Gibco BRL. M13mp18 ssDNA was purified from phage that was isolated by two successive bandings in cesium chloride gradients. M13mp18 ssDNA was primed with a 30-mer (map position 6817-6846) as described. The pET protein expression vectors and BL21 (DE3) protein expression strain of *E. coli* were purchased from Novagen. DNA modification enzymes were from New England Biolabs. *Aquifex aeolicus* genomic

DNA was a gift of Dr. Robert Huber and Dr. Karl Stetter (Regensburg University, Germany). Protein concentrations were determined by absorbance at 280nm using extention coefficients calculated from their known Trp and Tyr content using the equation $\varepsilon_{280}=Trp_m$ (5690 M^{-1} cm^{-1})+ Tyr_n (1280 M^{-1} cm^{-1}).

EXAMPLE 18

Purification of α Encoded by *dnaE*

The *Aquifex aeolicus dnaE* gene was previously identified (Deckert et al., 1998). The *dnaE* was obtained by searching the *Aquifex aeolicus* genome with the amino acid sequence of *T.th* α subunit (encoded by *dnaE*). The *dnaE* gene was amplified from *Aquifex aeolicus* genomic DNA by PCR using the following primers: the upstream 37mer (5'-GTGTGTCATATGAGTAAG GATTTCGTCCACCTTCACC-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 157) contains an NdeI site (underlined); the downstream 34mer (5'-GTGTGTGGATCCGGGGACTACTCGGAAGTAAGGG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 158) contains a BamHI site (underlined). The PCR product was digested with NdeI and BamHI, purifed, and ligated into the pET24 NdeI and BamHI sites to produce pETAadnaE.

The pETAadnaE plasmid was transformed into the BL21 (DE3) strain of *E. coli*. Cells were grown in 50L of LB containing 100μg/ml of kanamycin, 5mM $MgSO_4$ at 37°C to OD_{600} = 2.0, induced with 2mM IPTG for 20h at 20°C, then collected by centrifugation. Cells were resuspended in 400ml 50mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 10% sucrose, 1M NaCl, 30mM spermidine, 5mM DTT and 2mM EDTA. The following procedures were performed at 4°C. Cells were lysed by passing them twice through a French Press (15,000 psi) followed by centrifugation at 13,000 rpm for 90 min at 4°C. In this protein preparation, as well as each of those that follow, the induced *Aquifex aeolicus* protein was easily discernible as a large band in an SDS polyacrylamide gel stained with Coomassie Blue. Hence, column fractions were assayed for the presence of the *Aquifex aeolicus* protein by SDS PAGE analysis, which forms the basis for pooling column fractions.

The clarified cell lysate was heated to 65°C for 30 min and the precipitate was removed by centrifugation at 13,000 rpm in a GSA rotor for 1h. The

supernatant (1.4gm, 280ml) was dialyzed against buffer A (20mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5)), 10% glycerol, 0.5 mM EDTA, 5mM DTT) overnight, then diluted to 320ml with buffer A to a conductivity equal to 100mM NaCl. The dialysate was applied to a 150ml Fast Flow Q (FFQ) Sepharose column (Pharmacia) equilibrated in buffer A, and eluted with a 1.5L linear gradient of 0-500mM NaCl in buffer A. Eighty fractions were collected. Fractions 38-58 (1g, 390ml) were pooled, dialyzed versus buffer A overnight, and applied to a 250ml Heparin Agarose column (Bio-Rad) equilibrated with buffer A. Protein was eluted with a 1L linear 0-5mM NaCl gradient in buffer A. One hundred fractions were collected. Fractions 69-79 (320 mg in 200 ml) were pooled and dialyzed against buffer A containing 100 mM NaCl. The α preparation was aliquoted and stored frozen at -80°C (see Fig. 27).

EXAMPLE 19

Purification of δ Encoded by *holA*

The *Aquifex aeolicus holA* gene was not previously identified by the genome sequencing group at Diversa (Deckert et al., 1998). *Aquifex aeolicus holA* was identified by searching the *Aquifex aeolicus* genome with the amino acid sequence of the *T.th.* δ subunit (encoded by *holA*). The *Aquifex aeolicus holA* was amplified by PCR using the following primers: the upstream 36mer (5'-GTGTGTCATATGGAAACCACAATATTCCAGTTCCAG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 159) contains an NdeI site (underlined); the downstream 39mer (5'-GTGTGTGGATCCTTATCCACCATGAGAAGTATTTTTCAC-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 160) contains a BamHI site (underlined). The PCR product was digested with NdeI and BamHI, purified, and ligated into the pET24 NdeI and BamHI sites to produce pETAaholA.

The pETAaholA plasmid was transformed into *E. coli* strain BL21 (DE3). Cells were grown in 50L of LB media containing 100μg/ml kanamycin. Cells were grown at 37°C to OD_{600} = 2.0, induced for 20h upon addition of 2mM IPTG, then collected by centrifugation. Cells from 25L of culture were lysed as described in Example 18.

The cell lysate was heated to 65°C for 30 min and the precipatate was removed by centrifugation. The supernatant (650mg, 240ml) was dialyzed against

buffer A, adjusted to a conductivity equal to 160mM NaCl by addition of 40ml of buffer A, and applied to a 220ml Heparin Agarose column equilibrated in buffer A containing 100mM NaCl. The column was eluted with 1.0L linear gradient of 150-700 mM NaCl in buffer A. One hundred and four fractions were collected. Fractions 45-56 were pooled (250mg, 210 ml), diluted with 230ml buffer A to a conductivity equal to 230mM NaCl, then loaded onto a 100ml FFQ Sepharose column equilbrated in buffer A containing 150mM NaCl. The column was eluted with 200ml linear gradient of 150-750mM NaCl in buffer A; seventy-three fractions were collected. Fractions 16-38 were pooled (95mg, 40ml), aliquoted, and stored at -80°C (see Fig. 27).

EXAMPLE 20

Purification of δ' Encoded by *holB*

The *Aquifex aeolicus holB* gene was previously identified by the genome sequencing facility at Diversa (Deckert et al., 1998). The *Aquifex aeolicus holB* sequence was obtained by searching the *Aquifex aeolicus* genome with the sequence of the *T.th.* δ' (encoded by *holB*). The *Aquifex aeolicus holB* gene was amplified by PCR using the following primers: the upstream 39mer (5'-GTGTGTCATATGGAAAAAGTTTTTTTTGGAAA AAACTCCAG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 161) contains an NdeI site (underlined); the downstream 35mer (5'-GTGTGTGGATCCTTAATCCGCCTGAACGGCTAACG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 162) contains a BamHI site (underlined). The PCR product was digested with NdeI and BamHI, purified, and ligated into the pET24 NdeI and BamHI site to produce pETAaholB.

The pETAaholB plasmid was transformed into *E. coli* strain BL21 (DE3). Cells were grown at 37°C in 50L media containing 100μg/ml kanamycin to OD_{600} 2.0, then induced for 3h upon addition of 0.2mM IPTG. Cells were collected by centrifugation and were lysed using lysozyme by the heat lysis procedure (Wickner and Kornberg, 1974). The cell lystate was heated to 65°C for 30 min and precipatate was removed by centrifugation. The supernatant (2.4g, 400ml) was dialyzed versus buffer A, then applied to a 220ml FFQ Sepharose column equilibrated in buffer A. Protein was eluted with a 1L linear gradient of 0-500mM NaCl in buffer A; eighty

fractions were collected. Fractions 23-30 were pooled and diluted 2-fold with buffer A to a conductivity equal to 100mM NaCl, then loaded onto a 200ml Heparin Agarose column equilibrated in buffer A. Protein was eluted with a 1L linear gradient of 0-1.0M NaCl in bufferA; eighty-four fractions were collected. Fractions 46-66 were pooled (1.3g, 395ml), dialyzed versus buffer A containing 100mM NaCl, then aliquoted and stored frozen at -80°C (see Fig. 27)

EXAMPLE 21

Purification of τ Encoded by *dnaX*

The *Aquifex aeolicus dnaX* gene was previously identified (Deckert et al., 1998). The *dnaX* gene sequence was obtained by searching the *Aquifex aeolicus* genome with the sequence of *T.th.* τ subunit (encoded by *dnaX*). The *Aquifex aeolicus dnaX* was amplified by PCR using the following primers: the upstream 41mer (5'-GTGTGTCATATGAACTACGTTCCCTTCGCGAGAAAGTACAG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 163) contains an NdeI site (underlined); the downstream 36mer (5'-GTGTGTGGATCCTTAAAACAGCCTCGTCCCGCTGGA-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 164) contains a BamHI site (underlined). The PCR product was digested with NdeI and BamHI, purified, and ligated into the pET24 NdeI and BamHI sites to produce pETAadnaX.

The pETAadnaX plasmid was transformed into *E. coli* strain BL21 (DE3). Cells were grown in 50L LB containing 100 μg/ml kanamycin at 37°C to $OD_{600} = 0.6$, then induced for 20h at 20°C upon addition of IPTG to 0.2mM. Cells were collected by centrifugation and lysed as described in Example 18. The clarified cell lysate was heated to 65°C for 30 min and the protein precipitate was removed by centrifugation. The supernatant (1.1g in 340ml) was treated with 0.228g/ml ammonium sulfate followed by centrifugation. The τ subunit remained in the pellet which was dissolved in buffer B (20mM Hepes (pH 7.5), 0.5mM EDTA, 2mM DTT, 10% glycerol) and dialyzed versus buffer B to a conductivity equal to 87mM NaCl. The dialysate (1073mg, 570ml) was applied to a 200ml FFQ Sepharose column equilibrated in buffer A. The column was eluted with a 1.5L linear gradient of 0-500mM NaCl in buffer A; eighty fractions were collected. Fractions 28-37 were pooled (289mg, 138ml), dialyzed against buffer A to a conductivity equal to 82mM

NaCl, then loaded onto a 150ml column of Heparin Agarose equilibrated in buffer A. The column was eluted with a 900ml linear gradient of 0-500mM NaCl in buffer A; thirty-two fractions were collected. Fractions 15-18 (187mg, 110ml) were dialyzed versus buffer A, then aliquoted and stored at -80°C (see Fig. 27).

EXAMPLE 22

Purification of β Encoded by *dnaN*

The *Aquifex aeolicus dnaN* gene was previously identified (Deckert et al., 1998). The *dnaN* sequence was obtained by searching the *Aquifex aeolicus* genome with the sequence of *T.th.* β subunit (encoded by *dnaN*). The *Aquifex aeolicus dnaN* gene was amplified by PCR using the following primers: the upstream 33mer (5'-GTGTGTCATATG CGCGTTAAGGTGGACAGGGAG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 165) contains an NdeI site (underlined); the downstream 36mer (5'-TGTGTCTCGAG TCATGGCTACACCCTCATCGGCAT-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 166) contains a XhoI site (underlined). The PCR product was digested with NdeI and BamHI, purified, and ligated into the pET24 NdeI and BamHI sites to produce pETAadnaN.

The pETAadnaN plasmid was transformed into *E. coli* strain BL21 (DE3). Cells were grown in 1L LB containing 100mg/ml kanamycin at 37°C to OD_{600} = 1.0, then induced for 6h upon addition of 2mM IPTG. Cells were collected (7g) and lysed as described in Example 18. The cell lysate was heated to 65°C for 30 min and the protein precipitate was removed by centrifugation. The supernatant (39mg, 45ml) was applied to a 10ml DEAE Sephacel column (Pharmacia) equilibrated in buffer A. The column was eluted with a 100ml linear gradient of 0-500mM NaCl in bufferA; seventy-five fractions were collected. Fractions 45-57 were pooled (18.7mg), dialyzed versus buffer A, and applied to a 30ml Heparin Agarose column equilibrated in buffer A. The column was eluted with a 300ml linear gradient of 0-500mM NaCl in buffer A; sixty-five fractions were collected. Fractions 27-33 were pooled (11mg, 28ml) and stored at -80°C (see Fig. 27).

EXAMPLE 23

Purification of SSB Encoded by ssb

The *Aquifex aeolicus ssb* gene was previously identified (Deckert et al., 1998g). The *ssb gene* sequence was obtained by searching the *Aquifex aeolicus* genome with the sequence of *T.th.* SSB (encoded by *ssb*). The *Aquifex aeolicus ssb* gene was amplified by PCR using the following primers: the upstream 47mer (5'-GTGTGTCATATGCTCAA TAAGGTTTTTATAATAGGAAGACTTACGGG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 167) contains an NdeI site (underlined); the downstream 39mer (5'-GTGTGGATCCTTA AAAAGGTATTTCGTCCTCTTCATCGG-3') (SEQ. ID. No. 168) contains a BamHI site (underlined). The PCR product was digested with NdeI and BamHI, purified, and ligated into the pET16 NdeI and BamHI sites to produce pETAassb.

The pETAassb plasmid was transformed into *E. coli* strain BL21 (DE3). Cells were grown in 6L of LB media containing 200µg/ml ampicillin. Cells were grown at 37°C to OD_{600}= 0.6, then induced at 15°C overnight in the presence of 2mM IPTG and collected by centrifugation. Cells were lysed as described above in Example 18, except cells were resuspended in buffer C (20mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.9), 500mM NaCl).

The cell lysate was heated to 65°C for 30 min, then the precipitate was removed by centrifugation. The supernatant (1.4g, 190ml) was applied to 25ml Chelating Sepharose column (Pharmacia-Biotech) charged with 50mM Nickel Sulfate and then equilibrated in buffer C containing 5mM Imidazole. The column was eluted with a 300ml linear gradient of 5-100mM Imidazole in buffer C. Fractions of 4ml were collected. Fractions 81-92 were pooled (~240mg in 48ml) and dialyzed overnight against 2L of buffer B containing 200mM NaCl. The dialysate was diluted to a conductivity equal to 92mM NaCl using buffer A and then loaded onto an 8ml MonoQ column equilibrated in buffer A containing 100mM NaCl. The column was eluted with a 120ml linear gradient of 100-500mM Imidazole in buffer A. Seventy-four fractions were collected. Fractions 57-70 were pooled (100mg, 25ml), aliquoted, and stored at -80°C (see Fig. 27).

EXAMPLE 24

MonoQ Preparation of τδδ'

The δ subunit (0.29mg) purified in Example 19 and δ' subunit (0.31mg) purified in Example 20 were mixed in a volume of 2.8ml of buffer A at 15°C. After 30min, the τ subunit (0.5mg in 1.4ml), purified in Example 21, was added and the reaction was incubated a further 1h at 15°C. The reaction was applied to a 1ml MonoQ column equilibrated in buffer A. The τδδ' complex elutes later than either τ, δ or δ' alone. Protein was eluted with a 32ml linear gradient of 100-500mM NaCl in buffer A; eighty fractions were collected. Analysis of the MonoQ fractions in a SDS polyacylamide gel shows a peak of τδδ' complex that elutes in fractions of 32-38 (see Fig. 28). The peak fractions 850μg were stored at -80°C. This procedure can easily be scaled up. For example, a much larger amount of τδδ' was constituted by following a similar protocol and using a 8ml MonoQ column, which yielded 9.6mg of τδδ'.

EXAMPLE 25

Constitution of ατδδ' Complex

The reaction mixture contained 1.2 mg αsubunit (9nmol; 133,207 da) purified in Example 18, 0.41mg τ subunit (7.5 nmol; 54,332 da) purified in Example 21, 0.41 mg δ subunit (10 nmol; 40,693 da) purified in Example 19, and 0.2 mg δ' subunit (9nmol; 29,000 da) purified in Example 20 in 1.1ml buffer A. The α and τ subunit solutions were premixed in 871μl for 2h at 15°C before adding δ and δ' subunit solution, then the complete mixture was allowed to incubate an additional 12 h at 15°C. The reaction may not require an order of addition, or these extended incubation times. The reaction mixture was concentrated to 200μl using a Centricon 30 at 4°C, then applied to an FPLC Superose 6 HR 10/30 column (25ml) at 4°C developed with a continuous flow of buffer A containing 100mM NaCl. After the first 216 drops (6.6ml), fractions of 7 drops each were collected. Fractions were analyzed on a SDS polyacrylamide gel stained with Coomassie Blue (Fig. 29). The analysis was repeated using the α subunit alone (Fig. 29). The results show that the

peak fractions of α shift to a considerably earlier position when τ, δ and δ' are present and α comigrates with τ, δ, and δ', when compared to the elution position of α alone, indicating that α assembles with τ, δ and δ' into a αττδδ' complex.

EXAMPLE 26

αττδδ' Functions with the β Clamp

Replication reactions were performed using circular M13mp18 ssDNA primed with a synthetic DNA 90 mer oligonucleotide. Reactions contained 8.6μg primed M13mp18 ssDNA, 9.4μg SSB purified in Example 23, 1.0μg αττδδ' prepared in Example 25, and 2.0μg β subunit purified in Example 22 (when present), in 230μl of 20mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 5mM DTT, 4% glycerol, 8mM $MgCl_2$, 0.5mM ATP, 60μM each dATP and dGTP (buffer composition is for a final volume of 250μl). Reactions were mixed on ice, then aliquoted into separate tubes containing 25μl each. For each timed reaction, the mixture was brought to 65°C for 2 min before initiating syntheses upon addition of 2μl of dCTP and α^{32}P-dTTP (final centrations, 60 and 40μM, respectively). Aliquots were quenched at the times indicated in Fig. 30 upon adding 4μl of 0.25M EDTA, 1% SDS. Quenched reactions were then analyzed in a 0.8% alkaline agarose gel. The results, illustrated in Fig. 30, demonstrate that efficient synthesis requires addition of the β subunit. Comparison with size standards in the same gel indicates an average speed of ~125 nucleotides; the leading edge of the product smear indicates a maximum speed of 375 nucleotides/s.

EXAMPLE 27

Purification of *Tth.* α subunit

To obtain *T.th.* α subunit, 8 L of *E. coli* BL21(DE3) cells harboring pETtthalpha were grown to O.D. = 0.3 and induced upon adding IPTG. Cells were collected by centrifugation and resuspended in 200 ml 50mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 10% sucrose, 1M NaCl, 30mM spermidine, 5mM DTT and 2mM EDTA. The following procedures were performed at 4°C. Cells were lysed by passing them three times through a French Press (20,000 psi) followed by incubation at 4°C for 30 min and then centrifugation at 18,000 rpm in an SS-34 rotor for 45 min at 4°C. Induced

protein was less that 1% total cell protien but was discernible as a band that migrated in the appropriate position for its predicted molecular weight in an SDS polyacrylamide gel stained with Coomassie Blue. Hence, column fractions were assayed for the presence of the protein by SDS PAGE analysis, which forms the basis for pooling column fractions.

The clarified cell lysate was heated to 65°C for 30 min and the precipitate was removed by centrifugation. The supernatant (1.4gm, 280ml) was dialyzed against buffer A (20mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 10% glycerol, 0.5 mM EDTA, 5mM DTT) overnight, then diluted to 320ml with buffer A to a conductivity equal to 100mM NaCl. The dialysate (approximately 150 mg) was applied to a 60ml DEAE Fast Flow Q (FFQ) Sepharose column (Pharmacia) equilibrated in buffer A, and eluted with a 600 ml linear gradient of 0-500mM NaCl in buffer A. Fractions of 8 ml each were collected. The *Tth.* α subunit could be seen as a major band in several fractions, especially in fractions 26-30. In these peak fractions the *Tth.* α subunit was approximately 20-30 percent pure.

EXAMPLE 28

Purification of *Tth.* ε subunit

The *dnaQ* gene was cloned into the pET16 expression plasmid using the Val within the context "VGLWEW..." and transformed into *E. coli* (BL21(DE3). This pET plasmid places an N-terminal leader containing six histidines onto the expressed protein to facilitate purification via use of chelate affinity chromatography. Twelve liters of cells were grown to an OD of 0.7 and induced with IPTG. Induced cells were collected by centrifugation and resuspended in 150 ml of buffer C (20mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.9), 500mM NaCl). Cells were lysed by passing them two times through a French Press (20,000 psi) followed by incubation at 4°C for 30 min and then centrifugation at 13,800 rpm in an SLA-1500 rotor for 45 min at 4°C. Induced protein appeared greater than 5% total cell protien and was easily discernible as a band that migrated in the appropriate position for its predicted molecular weight in an SDS polyacrylamide gel stained with Coomassie Blue. Hence, column fractions were assayed for the presence of the protein by SDS PAGE analysis, which forms the basis for pooling column fractions.

Upon analyzing the precipitate from the cell lysis, and the supernatent, it was determined that the epsilon subunit was insoluble and appeared in the precipitate. Therefore the cell pellet was resuspended in 100 ml of binding buffer containing 6M freshly deionized urea. This resuspension was then placed in centrifuge bottles and spun at 13,800 rpm for 45 min in the SLA-1500 rotor. The epsilon was in the supernatent and was applied to a 25 ml Chelating Sepharose column (Pharmacia-Biotech) charged with 50 mM Nickel Sulfate and then equilibrated in buffer C containing 5mM Imidazole. The column was washed with two column volumes of buffer C, then washed with 5 column volumes of beffer C containing 80 mM Imidazole (final). Then the *Tth* epsilon was eluted with a 250 ml linear gradient of 60-1000 mM Imidazole in buffer C. Fractions of 4ml were collected. Fractions 15-24 were pooled (~131 mg) and dialyzed overnight against 2L of buffer A containing 6M urea, but no NaCl or glycerol. The dialysate was then loaded onto an 8ml MonoQ column equilibrated in buffer A containing 6M urea. The column was eluted with a 120ml linear gradient of 0-500 mM NaCl in buffer A containing urea. Sixty five fractions were collected. The epsilon is approximately 80-90 percent pure at this stage. Fractions 13-17 were stored at -80°C. The epsilon is in urea but is at a concentration of 5-10 mg/ml, and thus can be used with other proteins by diluting it such that the final urea concentration is less than 0.5 M. This level of urea does not generally denature protein, and should allow epsilon to renature for catalytic activity.

EXAMPLE 29

Temperature optimum of *Aquifex* and *Thermus* α subunit DNA polymerases

The temperature optimum of the alpha subunits of the *Aquifex* and *Thermus* replicases was tested in the calf thymus DNA replication assay. In this experiment, the reactions were assembled on ice in 25 µl containing 2.5 µg calf thymus activated DNA, and either 0.88 ug *Aquifex* α, or 0.6 µg of the *Thermus* α DEAE pool of peak fractions (obtained from Examples 18 and 28, respectively) in 20 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.8), 8 mM $MgCl_2$, 10 mM KCl, 10 mM $(NH_4)SO_4$, 2 mM $MgSO_4$, 0.1% Triton X-100, 60 µM each dATP, dCTP, dGTP, and 20 µM α^{32}P-dTTP. Reactons were shifted to either 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, or 90°C, then stopped

after 5 minutes and spotted onto DE81 filters to quantitate DNA synthesis. The results, illustrated in Figs. 31-32, show that these enzymes increase in activity as the temperature is raised. The *Thermus* α has a broad peak of activity from 70-80°C (Fig. 31), while the *Aquifex* α is maximal at 80°C (Fig. 32). The *Aquifex* α retains considerable activity at 90°C, whereas the *Thermus* α is nearly inactive at 90°C, a result that is consistent with the higher temperature at which the *Aquifex aeolicus* may live relative to the *Thermus* bacterium.

EXAMPLE 30

Temperature optimum of *Aquifex* αττδδ'/β

Aquifex α, β, ττδδ', SSB and αττδδ' were tested for stability at different temperatures by incubating the protein in a solution, followed by performing a replication assay of the protein. Incubation was performed in 0.4 ml tubes under mineral oil. The 5 µl reaction mixture contained: buffer B (20 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 5 mM DTT, 5 mM EDTA), and either: 0.352 µg of α (Fig. 33A), 0.2 µg of β (Fig. 33B), 0.125 µg τ complex (Fig. 33C), 0.32 µg SSB and 0.042 µg primed M13mp18 ssDNA (Fig. 33D), 0.82 µg Pol III* (Fig. 33E). Reactions were incubated for 2 min. at either 70, 80, 85, or 90°C in the presence of either 0.1% Triton X-100 (filled diamonds); 0.05% Tween-20 and 0.01% NP-40 (filled circles); 4 mM $CaCl_2$ (filled triangles); 40% Glycerol (inverted filled triangles); 0.01% Triton X-100, 0.05% Tween-20, 0.01% NP-40, 4 mM $CaCl_2$ (half-filled square); 40% Glycerol, 0.1% Triton X-100 (open diamonds); 40% Glycerol, 0.05% Tween-20, 0.01% NP-40 (open circles); 40% Glycerol, 4 mM $CaCl_2$ (open triangles); 40% Glycerol, 0.01% Triton X-100, 0.05% Tween-20, 0.01% NP-40, 4 mM $CaCl_2$ (half-filled diamonds). After heating, reactions were shifted to ice and 20 µl of replication assay buffer was added followed by incubation for 1.5 min at 70°C; 15 µl was then spotted onto a DE81 filter and DNA synthesis was quantitated. The replication assay buffer contained: 60 mM Tris-HCl (pH 9.1 at 25°C), 8mM $MgCl_2$, 18 mM $(NH_4)_2SO_4$, 2 mM ATP, 60 µM each of dATP, dCTP, dGTP, and 20 µM [α^{-32}P] TTP (specific activity 10,000 cpm/pmol), and 0.264 µg primed M13mp18 ssDNA. To assay for β, 0.1 ng αττδδ' was added to the reaction. To assay ττδδ', 0.9 ng β and 0.17 ng α were added to the reaction. To

assay for SSB, 0.17 ng *E. coli* β and 0.1 ng *E. coli* αττδδ' were added to the reaction followed by incubation for 1.5 min at 37°C. To assay for αττδδ', 0.9 ng β was added to the reaction. To assay α, the calf thymus DNA replication assay was performed in the buffer as described above but 2.5 μg activated calf thymus DNA was used instead of primed M13mp18 ssDNA, no other replication proteins were added, and incubation was for 8 min at 70°C.

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This invention may be embodied in other forms or carried out in other ways without departing from the spirit or essential characteristics thereof. The present disclosure is therefore to be considered as in all respects illustrative and not restrictive, the scope of the invention being indicated by the appended claims, and all changes which come within the meaning and range of equivalency are intended to be embraced therein.